

RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM APPLICANT ACCOUNTABILITY AND
PROCESS EFFICIENCY PROJECT

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RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM APPLICANT ACCOUNTABILITY
AND PROCESS EFFICIENCY PROJECT

A
PROJECT

Presented to the Faculty
of the University of Alaska Anchorage

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

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Anchorage, Alaska

May 2015



**Engineering, Science
& Project Management**
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project

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Masters of Science in Project Management

Capstone Project

April 2015

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms	4
List of Exhibits	4
Abstract.....	5
Key Words.....	5
Project Introduction	6
Program Background.....	6
Identified Needs and Goals.....	7
Project Scope.....	7
Project Research and Analysis.....	8
Description of Research Methods	8
Literature Research and Analysis.....	8
Accountability and Assumptions Analysis	8
Grant Fraud Triangle.....	9
State and Federal Law	9
Federal Audit Process	9
Federal Risk Analysis Review	10
Recreational Trails Program Best Practices	10
Qualitative Survey Research	11
Stakeholder Survey Composition.....	11
Decision Framework	11
Protocol and Documentation.....	12
Applicant Feedback Survey Significant Results	12
Internal Team Survey Significant Results.....	12
Conclusions from Survey Data	15
Stakeholder Requirements Analysis	16
Project Strategy.....	16
Products	17
Application Instruction and Information Manual.....	17
Responsibility Statement	18
Implementation	18
Limitations and Recommendations For Further Improvements and Changes	18

Limitations	18
Continuous Improvement	18
Conclusions	19
Applicant Accountability	19
Process Efficiency	19
Aknowledgements	20
Literature Cited.....	21
Bibliography	22
Appendicies	24
Appendix A: Research Data	24
Appendix B: Application Instruction and Information Manual.....	45
Appendix C: Applicant Responsibility Statement.....	46

List of Acronyms

DNR Department of Natural Resources

DPOR Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

FHWA United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highways Association

PMBOK Project Management Body of Knowledge

RTP Recreational Trails Program

List of Exhibits

Exhibit 1: Administrative Control Survey Question

Abstract

The Recreational Trails Program provides reimbursable grant funding for recreational trail development and repair, and environmental protection and safety/education programs relating to recreational trail use. The Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project developed two tools to improve the effectiveness of the program.

New grant applicants and current grantees require clear guidance about state and federal procurement requirements, federal regulations, and programmatic guidelines for the Recreational Trails Program in Alaska. The iterative tool and administrative controls created for this project will help to guide and inform the applicants and add legal protection for the State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) immediately and into the future. The Application Instruction and Information Manual (Manual) details the rules, regulations, requirements, and processes for compliance surrounding procurement and federal grants and is publically-available for applicants to utilize during the grant cycle. Legal language has been added to the signature page of the application so each applicant understands the importance of compliance and integrity when managing a federal grant. The Manual is intended to be a generalizable tool that will continue to evolve as different groups of stakeholders provide input and feedback with regard to its utility.

This project was initiated to assist the majority of grant applicants with processes, regulations, and guidelines, increase comprehension and success, and reduce management time coaching and frustration for applicants. To a lesser degree but intended to mitigate a higher risk, this project researched, created, and added supplementary legal language into the application that will serve to both add a layer of legal protection for the DNR and remind applicants of their fiscal responsibilities when managing federal grant funds.

The hypothesis for this project is that when applicants have an improved means by which to meet the requirements of the grant program they will become more self-sufficient, knowledgeable, successful, and compliant. It is the program manager's responsibility to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations, as well as program guidance, and there are now effective tools and administrative controls to consistently achieve this.

Key Words

- Applicant Accountability
- Federal Grant Programs
- Grant fraud
- Grant Program Administrative Controls
- Grant Programs
- Recreational Trails Program (RTP)
- 2 CFR 200 Implementation
- Process Improvement
- Stakeholder Involvement
- Stakeholder Management

Project Introduction

The Alaska State Trail Program Manager identified two areas of the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) that needed improvement and produced the deliverables to help accomplish those goals. She followed a project management plan and used project management methodology throughout the planning and execution phases of the project. This document and the associated products represent the execution phase of the RTP Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project (Project). An Application Instruction and Information Manual (Manual) was developed for RTP applicants in Alaska, detailing how to apply for funding and comply with federal and state regulations and programmatic guidelines. The Manual will be available on the Alaska State Trails Program website for applicants to study and utilize during the grant cycle that opens August 15 each year. Included in the grant application is now supplemental language on the signature page regarding an applicant's responsibility for state and federal procurement rules, regulations, and guidance as it pertains to the RTP.

Originally the Applicant Needs Analysis survey was developed as a singular research tool but upon further analysis it will be used repeatedly as part of the continuous improvement process. This tool will be discussed primarily in the research and the continuous improvement sections of the paper.

A secondary result of the research and analysis for this project is the development and adoption of multiple administrative and internal control measures as simple but meaningful tools that will also bolster the continuous improvement process.

This paper will discuss the background of the RTP, identify the needs and goals of the project, discuss the methods used for research and analysis and provide research conclusions. In addition this paper will identify the products produced as a result of the research and how they will be utilized to continuously improve the program and its processes.

Program Background

The purpose of the RTP is to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities in Alaska for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. Reimbursable grant funds are available for recreational trail development and repair, and environmental protection and safety/education programs relating to recreational trail use.

This program is unique in that legislatively it is specified that 30% of the funds must be expended for projects that are strictly motorized, 30% will be spent on projects that are strictly non-motorized, while at the same time encouraging the development of projects that provide for multiple uses, 40 % must be spent on projects called *diversified*.

Of the funds available for the RTP, a maximum of 5% may be used for safety and education focused projects. This program was first funded in 1993 through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and was called the National Recreational Trails Fund. Since that time, this program has funded over 440 trail projects in Alaska with nearly \$13.5 million dollars, and over 20,500 trail-related projects nation-wide, including urban greenways, nature centers, and horse, hiking, mountain bike, and motorized trails, as well as snow and water routes.

The RTP is funded from the Federal Highway Trust Fund managed by the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA), which is funded from a percentage of federal fuel taxes. That money is allocated through the current Highway Transportation Bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP 21), where it continues the RTP as part of federal surface transportation funding.

At the state level the program is managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR). Since its inception, the program has gone through many changes at both the state and federal levels. The risks identified in this paper stem from the federal oversight and stricture increasing over the years. For many years program managers were allowed a flexible interpretation of the programmatic guidance and regulations, and passed those expectations on to the applicants and grantees. Without strict requirements for

reporting or spending federal funds, grantees became accustomed to very loose expectations and a culture of misuse became acceptable. Today there are still variations in regulatory and guidance interpretation nationwide, however strict adherence and documentation is the rule.

Because these conditions appear to be “changes” to those who have been engaged with the program for several years, applicants and grantees are resistant to, and frustrated by, the added requirements and strict oversight.

One example of the additional and reinforced requirements is the new 2 CFR 200 “Super Circular” that took effect across federal grant programs as of December 26, 2014. These regulations from the Federal Office of Management and Budget are intended to “streamline” several former regulations, add some new components, and have them all in one *convenient* reference. These regulations have significantly increased the requirements for grantees and granting agencies such as DNR. Some of these changes include the FHWA doing a mandatory risk analysis on each federal grant program they manage (RTP being one), requiring establishment of performance standards, required increase of internal controls, hard project deadlines, strict timeline limits, and robust documentation for project spending, etc.

The RTP manager has developed new legal language and a Manual to help bring the culture from where it was when she started managing the program to where it needs to be, strictly compliant with federal and state laws and programmatic guidance.

Identified Needs and Goals

The Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK 2013) defines *compliance* as a general concept of conforming to a rule, standard, law, or requirement. It is the RTP manager’s responsibility to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations, as well as program guidance, and there are currently no effective processes or tools to consistently help the applicants achieve this.

New grant applicants and current grantees require clear guidance about state and federal procurement requirements, federal regulations, and programmatic guidelines for the Recreational Trails Program in Alaska. This project accommodates two needs. The iterative tool and administrative controls created will help to guide and inform the applicants and add legal protection for the State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) immediately and into the future. The Manual details the rules, regulations, requirements, and processes for compliance surrounding procurement and federal grants and is publically-available for applicants to utilize during the grant cycle. Legal language has been added to the signature page of the application so each applicant understands the importance of compliance and integrity when managing a federal grant. The Manual is intended to be a generalizable tool that will continue to evolve as different groups of stakeholders provide input and feedback with regard to its utility.

The predominant reason this project was initiated was to assist the majority of grant applicants with processes, regulations, and guidelines, increase comprehension and success, and reduce both management time in individual coaching and frustration of applicants. To a lesser degree but intended to mitigate a higher risk, this project researched, created, and added supplementary legal language into the application that will serve to both add a layer of legal protection for the DNR and remind applicants of their fiscal responsibilities when managing federal grant funds.

The hypothesis for this project is that when applicants have an improved means by which to meet the requirements of the grant program they will become more self-sufficient, knowledgeable, successful, and compliant. It is the program manager’s responsibility to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations, as well as program guidance, and there are now effective tools and administrative controls to consistently achieve this.

Project Scope

The scope of this project included the planning, development, and implementation of educational and informational material and creation and implementation of language in the grant application acknowledging applicant legal

responsibility for federal grant funds. The project was determined complete when the manual and the legal responsibility language was approved by the Sponsor and was ready to be posted on the State Trails Program website.

Project Research and Analysis

Description of Research Methods

Once the project needs were identified, the project manager began employing multiple research methods to help her build a foundation and structure to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the RTP grant application and reimbursement processes she manages.

A literature review was conducted focusing on issues of accountability, compliance, grant fraud, and performance standards and management. An investigation of federal and state law and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) also helped to inform the analysis. She explored best practices used by other RTP administrators nation-wide that were explored and vetted for regulatory compliance and practicability. And two surveys of different groups of stakeholders were conducted using qualitative research methodology.

This resulting information was used to develop and prioritize areas where applicants most require guidance and assistance and how to go about helping them efficiently through required procedures striving for compliance, accountability, and success.

The collected information informed the identified content for the Manual that will become available for the FFY16 grant cycle starting August 2015.

Literature Research and Analysis

Accountability and Assumptions Analysis

There are often parts of a project plan that are “developed based on a set of hypotheses, scenarios, or assumptions.” (PMBOK, 2013) Assumptions Analysis, according to PMBOK, “explores the validity of those assumptions as they apply to the project. It identifies risks to the project from inaccuracy, instability, inconsistency, or incompleteness of assumptions.” The project manager made the unrealistic assumption that she has influence over the applicants’ behavior simply by providing information and implementing an administrative control. After further thought and analysis this was not a risk-free assumption.

The original hypothesis about applicant accountability *assumed* that if applicants were required or expected to become more *accountable* for federal grant funds they would affect this through education and awareness. This assumption unfortunately does not account for all the possible risks. There is an alternate hypothesis that the assumed outcome will not happen simply by assuming. According to the “accountability paradox” (Bouckaert and Peters, 2002), there exists an “inherent strain between accountability and performance”. Bouckaert and Peters assert that increasing efforts to improve performance through accountability tends to have the opposite effect. Rather than acting as a driver for desired levels of improved performance, accountability tends to either slow down or stop the improvements.

After reading several articles by Dubnick, Bouckaert and Peters et al., it is understood that the assumption that grant program applicants will be more accountable or compliant merely by imposition of another layer of bureaucracy or administration, may not be accurate. Dubnick (2005) discusses that for accountability to have a “relationship” with improved performance there must be “designated consequences for designated parts of the social structure”. This is interpreted to mean that people are often motivated by outcomes or consequences, so these must accompany the

expectation of increased accountability to realize improvement. Tetlock (1991) concurs with this and says that when faced with the expectation that one will have to answer for an act or decision, people tend to “seek to satisfy what (they) perceive to be the demands and needs of the audience (they) are accounting to.”

The RTP is managed by both state and federal government entities and it stands to reason that creating administrative internal controls, performance measures, and consequences to accompany the expectations of increased accountability is basically what a bureaucracy or government entity is intended to accomplish.

Adding language to the application and requiring applicants to confirm their knowledge and responsibility may not actually make them more accountable, but may serve to make them aware of the gravity of the expectations and make those expectations more legally defensible in the rare case of noncompliance.

Grant Fraud Triangle

The grant fraud triangle is a model used by The Association of Certified Fraud Examiners for explaining the factors that cause someone to commit occupational fraud explains D. Cressey (1973). It consists of three components which, together, can lead to fraudulent behavior: 1. Perceived Financial Need, 2. Perceived Opportunity, and 3. Rationalization. He claims that *“Trusted persons become trust violators when they conceive of themselves as having a financial problem which is non-shareable, are aware this problem can be secretly resolved by violation of the position of financial trust, and are able to apply to their own conduct in that situation verbalizations which enable them to adjust their conceptions of themselves as trusted persons with their conceptions of themselves as users of the entrusted funds or property.”*

According to the Department of Defense (DOD report # DODIG-2014-094) Fraud is more likely to occur in organizations where there is a *“weak system of internal controls, poor security over assets, little fear of exposure and likelihood of detection, or unclear policies regarding acceptable behavior”*. Some of these conditions were identified in grantee organizations and controls have been put in place to mitigate these risks.

State and Federal Law

In many sections of the new 2 CFR 200 the federal procurement law defers to the state law. In 200.317 Procurement by States, it dictates that *“When procuring property and services under a Federal award, a state must follow the same policies and procedures it uses for procurements from its non-federal funds.”* In 2 CFR 200.318 (a) the law states that *“The non-federal entity (in this case DNR) must use its own documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable state and local laws and regulations, provided that the procurements conform to applicable federal law and the standards identified in this section.”* Alaska State and federal procurement requirements were researched and vetted as they pertain to the RTP, and have been included in the Manual.

Federal Audit Process

The new 2 CFR 200.507, Program-specific audits, gives a specific prescription for an audit and states that *The auditee must prepare the financial statement(s) for the Federal program that includes, at a minimum, a schedule of expenditures of Federal awards for the program and notes that describe the significant accounting policies used in preparing the schedule, a summary schedule of prior audit findings consistent with the requirements of 2 CFR 200.511.* The auditor then performs an audit of that financial statement, obtains an understanding of, and performs tests of, the internal controls over the program.

In 2 CFR 200.338 Remedies for non-compliance states that if a *non-Federal entity fails to comply with Federal statutes, regulations or the terms and conditions of a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity (in this case DNR) may impose additional conditions, as described in 2 CFR 200.207 Specific conditions.*

2 CFR 200.207 states that the *Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity may impose additional specific award conditions as needed, in accordance with paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section, under the following circumstances:*

- (1) Based on the criteria set forth in 2 CFR 200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants;*
- (2) When an applicant or recipient has a history of failure to comply with the general or specific terms and conditions of a Federal award;*
- (3) When an applicant or recipient fails to meet expected performance goals as described in §200.210 Information contained in a Federal award; or*
- (4) When an applicant or recipient is not otherwise responsible*

If it is determined that noncompliance cannot be remedied by imposing additional conditions or consequences, FHWA or DNR may take one or more of the following actions, as appropriate in the circumstances:

- (a) Temporarily withhold cash payments pending correction of the deficiency by the non-Federal entity or more severe enforcement action by the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity.*
- (b) Disallow (that is, deny both use of funds and any applicable matching credit for) all or part of the cost of the activity or action not in compliance.*
- (c) Wholly or partly suspend or terminate the Federal award.*
- (d) Initiate suspension or debarment proceedings as authorized under 2 CFR part 180 and Federal awarding agency regulations (or in the case of a pass-through entity, recommend such a proceeding be initiated by a Federal awarding agency).*
- (e) Withhold further Federal awards for the project or program.*
- (f) Take other remedies that may be legally available.*

Federal Risk Analysis Review

The potential risks associated with federal grant programs are wide ranging. The risks associated with not implementing new administrative controls and applicant instructional resources could likely result in the misuse of grant funds and a negative federal audit could result in total loss of federal funds.

The local FHWA office is working on a risk, and Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis of their programs including the RTP. The DNR manager has been collaborating with her FHWA counterpart on this assessment and was interested to find that they have included risks also listed in the risk analysis associated with this project. Those risks include: *If grant fraud is identified in the RTP program before there are better controls in place to prevent it, then an audit may occur and funding may be jeopardized.* Their response was: *Develop procedures and controls for RTP grantees to follow to minimize the risk of grant fraud.* They also included: *If DNR increases and improves training opportunities for RTP applicants, then applicants will have a more in-depth understanding of program requirements.* The project manager is utilizing the products and outcomes of this project to not only mitigate risk and potentially improve applicant accountability and performance, but to also build trust with her FHWA counterparts by working with them on similar goals of continuous improvement and risk mitigation for the RTP.

This kind of risk analysis in combination with robust federal regulations such as 2 CFR 200.205, *Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants*, and 2 CFR 200.303 *Internal Controls* will assist both federal and state components of the RTP in Alaska to secure compliance and mitigate fraud opportunities.

Recreational Trails Program Best Practices

The project manager is part of a group of people that manage the RTP throughout the country. This association allows for a cohort of people managing similar issues and facing similar problems. This being said, it is surprising how varied, even disparate, the rules, guidance, and allowances are from state to state. Nonetheless, this group has been an excellent source of lessons-learned and best practices, because, no matter the variations, each state must

adhere to federal regulations. Some of the documents reviewed for this research have been other states' application instructions or information and guidance materials.

This research resulted in identifying successful methodologies, best practices, and legal language used by other RTP managers, some of which have now been adopted into the program and administrative documents in Alaska.

Qualitative Survey Research

According to Corbin and Strauss (2008) "qualitative research allows researchers to get at the inner experience of participants". "...qualitative researchers take with great seriousness the words and actions of the people studied." RTP applicants have difficulties with the grant process and the project manager wanted to help improve applicants' satisfaction and ultimately encourage them to decrease their frustration and increase their success.

The surveys were developed to target subject matter experts and other key stakeholders involved with the management or application processes of the RTP. Questions were designed to gather information about the participants' experiences with the program and processes. The applicant needs analysis targeted specific current grantees and former applicants chosen for a variety of reasons. Some of those surveyed had already been quite interested in helping the program improve and had been responsive to inquiry in the past. Some had years of experience with the program and had lived through many of the changes discussed in this paper. Also emphasized in the participant choices were new applicants coming to the program with few pre-conceived expectations. The survey of internal stakeholders gathered feedback from the team of people who are involved with or manage particular aspects of the RTP. Their insights came from a more developed knowledge of regulatory requirements, and not simply a desire for ease of application or simplification of process.

Providing an application instruction and information manual is the preferred assistance method for 60% of those applicants surveyed for this paper. How effectively that resource is utilized cannot be determined at this time. These are the first steps in implementing a system of more training and continuous outreach. Until more training and outreach is done with applicants, a programmatic culture of understanding, compliance, and accountability is uncertain. Utilizing quality assurance and continuous improvement mechanisms the project manager will be able to accommodate the changing variable of stakeholders and improve future iterations of the manual as a generalizable tool whose inputs will continue to change and adapt.

Stakeholder Survey Composition

Respondent composition was analyzed according to stakeholder grouping and survey. The project manager surveyed two groups of stakeholders each with specifically tailored survey questions.

Survey number one was called the Recreational Trails Program Grant Process Improvement: Applicant Feedback. A total of thirty surveys were sent out and twenty were completed. The stakeholders targeted by this survey were current or former applicants as well as program advisory board members who have varying experience with the RTP.

Survey number two was called the Recreational Trails Program Grant Process Improvement. A total of eight surveys were sent to internal team members and eight were completed. The stakeholders targeted by this survey were people who regularly work with the management aspects of the RTP who included State Trails Program staff, DNR staff, and FHWA staff.

Decision Framework

The data was collected and organized by topic and by survey but also looked at the comments from both surveys combined and in comparison. While the project manager would like to accommodate all requests and eliminate all

problematic areas, she made her decisions about what to include based on first, if the request was in compliance with the governing regulations and programmatic guidance, and second, if it was practicable. After that, if a certain area received multiple comments and lots of attention, such as did the topic of the project budget, she will focus more time and effort on those areas, walking applicants through the process and including the topic in future trainings and workshops and include a thorough written narrative in the manual.

Protocol and Documentation

No personal or identifiable data was required to participate in the survey. Questions were broadly stated in order to solicit a wide range of honest information from volunteers and not to guide them in their answers.

The results of this survey were recorded and organized according to category or topic and then applied directly to the section in the manual for the area of the granting process they will affect. Seventeen total respondents included their contact information. Eleven respondents did not include any kind of identifying information. This was optional. The project manager kept all organized response information from each survey in two separate electronic files. The survey responses are kept with the identifying information and that information is kept in a separate electronic file along with the project manager's responses to their questions in email form. The signed Informed Consent forms are kept in a separate electronic file. The original signed papers have been shredded.

Applicant Feedback Survey Significant Results

Sixty percent of respondents asked for more written training or reference material to help navigate the application process. In comparison to thirteen percent who wanted to see more training and reference material in video format or trainings done telephonically. One person suggested a full time "help line". Other independent responses included:

- *Please provide a short tutorial;*
- *Please include examples of successful projects and reports;*
- *Include more information and instruction on environmental review requirements;*
- *Provide clear instructions, have clearer instructions for applying for permits; and*
- *Add consistent and easy guidelines on how to create a budget.*

Sixty-seven percent want the program application process improved by allowing for more time between access to new application documents and the grant deadline. Forty-two percent think the quality of the existing training and reference documents should be improved; and thirty-three percent want the manager to expand training opportunities. Another four responses included language to change or improve technological interface or allow for use of multiple technological formats. For further detail on the survey please see Appendix A.

Internal Team Survey Significant Results

Fifty seven percent of the internal management team answered that budget preparation was the area with which most applicants had difficulty. This aligned well with the earlier- reported 58% of applicants surveyed answered that preparing a project budget was their largest challenge when applying to the RTP.

The following question had interesting and somewhat conflicting results. Forty-three percent of the respondents thought that comparing the approved budget to the applicant's reimbursement request was an important control the team could employ to increase grantee compliance, and fifty-seven percent said "All of the above". However zero percent said that the team needed to "include more layers of oversight and approval." It is the project manager's conclusion that all new internal controls imposed on applicant s *would* be layers of oversight or approval. This finding will inspire an internal team dialogue to find the most appropriate solution for the program.

The project manager received an excellent answer in the *other* category from one respondent that made her reassess her approach to the applicant accountability affidavit which was discussed in the Project Management Plan. This is discussed in greater detail in the “products” section of this paper.

One outcome that was prominent through both surveys identified problems with applicants creating a sufficient budget. This translated into a detailed section of the manual explaining how the budget should be created, useful tips, frequently asked questions, and an example budget. This feedback will also help the project manager focus future training and assistance on budget issues. For further detail on the survey please see Appendix A.

Administrative Controls

A question was posed to the internal management team about what kind of administrative controls should be employed to ensure grant contract compliance. Ninety-nine percent of those internal stakeholders surveyed gave suggestions about internal and administrative controls that could be employed for improved compliance.

Those internal stakeholders agreed unanimously that there are needs for internal financial and management controls to add legal support for the program. To accommodate this, the project manager, along with the team, has identified, and is continuing to develop, control measures for what are seen as the highest risk areas of the program.

A secondary result of the research and analysis for this project is the development and adoption of multiple administrative and internal control measures as simple but meaningful tools that will also bolster the continuous improvement process.

Through research, the conditions under which grant fraud can occur and the three components that make up the Grant Fraud Triangle are more clearly understood. This, in addition to the survey results and the literature review, support the project manager’s conclusion that internal controls are essential and will be added as necessary to the program’s administration.

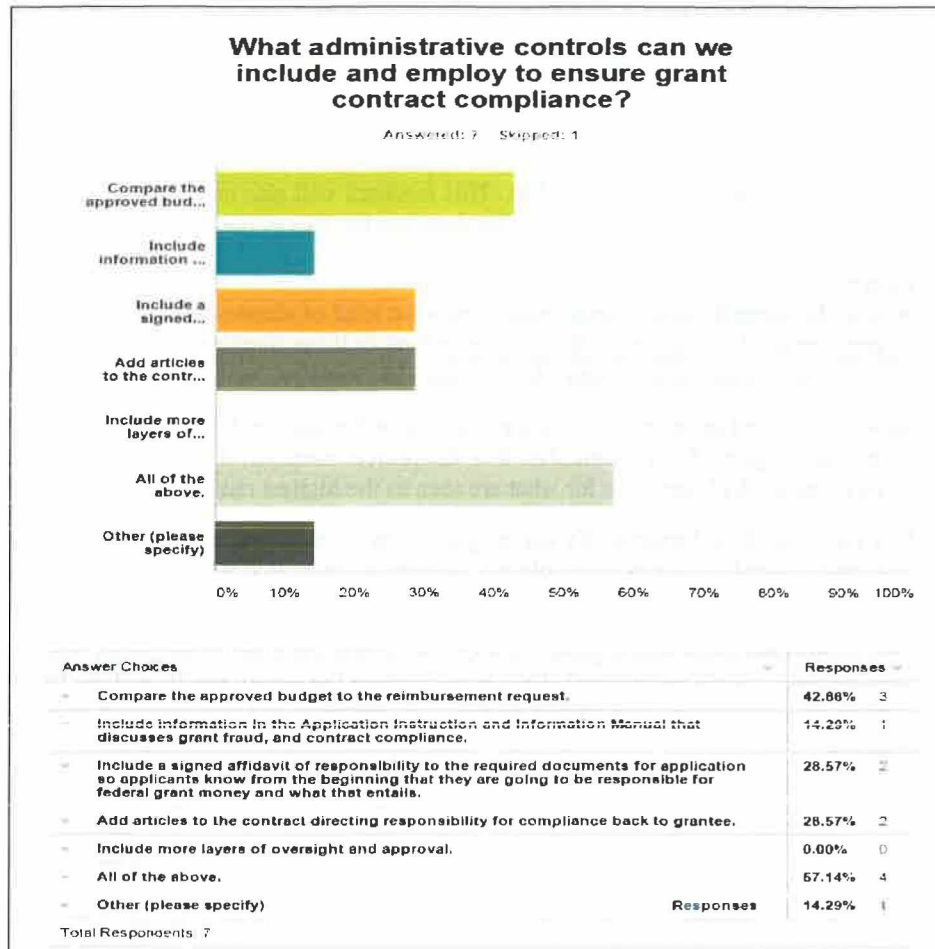


Exhibit 1 Administrative Control Survey Question

The internal management team was surveyed about the application of internal controls. See Exhibit 3. The answers have inspired several discussions as well as actual implementation of several internal financial and management controls to help guard against fraudulent activities. One of those controls has been included as a deliverable for this project and consists of language added to the application intended to inform and underscore the importance of applicant integrity and identify penalty for non-compliance. As discussed earlier in this paper this language may not be what facilitates applicant accountability but it will increase the legal defensibility for the program's management.

Other controls that were created as a result of this project include the newly instated requirement that all timesheets accounting for federal RTP funds have two manager signatures; this will add an additional layer of authentication that the alleged time was in fact spent on that specifically identified project or task.

A vehicle mileage log has been included for all federal RTP projects and will be required when charging any mileage or vehicle expenses to a federal RTP grant.

A rule has been instated that if there is a mistake in billing codes all reversal of expenditures must be approved by the Administrative Operations Manager prior to being sent to the headquarters in Juneau for final approval. This will add one more layer of verification of the information.

Strengthening the grant agreement language will be another internal control. According the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) a grant agreement is a *legally binding contract and grantees are obligated to use their grant funds as outlined in the agreement and to act with integrity when applying for and reporting their actual use of funds.*

Grantees are also obligated to properly track the use of funds and maintain adequate supporting documentation. (<http://www.justice.gov/oig/hotline/docs/GrantFraudPresentation.pdf>)

The DOJ Office of the Inspector General suggests the following ways to mitigate risk:

- Examine your operations to determine your fraud vulnerabilities.
- Implement specific fraud prevention strategies including educating others about the risks– the more people are aware of the issues, the more they can help prevent problems or detect them as early as possible.
- Maintain a well designed and tested system of internal controls.
- Ensure all financial or other certifications and progress reports are adequately supported with appropriate documentation and evidence.
- Identify any potential conflicts of interest issues and disclose them to the granting agency for specific guidance and advice.
- Follow a fair and transparent procurement process especially when utilizing contractors. Ensure the rate of pay is reasonable and justifiable and that the work product is well-defined and documented.

Finally and overarching, is the requirement that the RTP comply with 2 CFR 200.303 Internal Controls, which states that the non-Federal entity (in this case DNR) must: *(a) Establish and maintain effective internal control over the Federal award that provides reasonable assurance that the non-Federal entity is managing the Federal award in compliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award. b) Comply with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Federal awards. (c) Evaluate and monitor the non-Federal entity's compliance with statute, regulations and the terms and conditions of Federal awards. (d) Take prompt action when instances of noncompliance are identified including noncompliance identified in audit findings. (e) Take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other information the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity designates as sensitive or the non-Federal entity considers sensitive consistent with applicable Federal, state and local laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality.*

Conclusions from Survey Data

It is the project manager's conclusion analysis that the survey data provided important insight for improving not only the RTP documents but the processes. She was, in some cases, able to accommodate specific requests to change, add or subtract, or clarify elements of the documents or program guidance. For other suggestions she was not be able to do so because they were in contradiction to the regulations, national programmatic guidance, or simply not practicable.

For those respondents that chose to identify themselves and start a dialogue with the project manager, it was easier to address their specific concerns and questions in the manual and likewise will be in future trainings and workshops. Some conclusions strengthen the viewpoint that improving this program will be an iterative and continuous process and cannot be accomplished through this single exercise. This survey, upgraded as needed, is an iterative tool that will be used to continually improve the processes, measure the effectiveness of instituted changes, and take into account the changing needs of the RTP grant applicants. There are many variables from which to draw conclusions and those will change as the applicants change annually. There are regularly at least 75% repeat applicants and a few new ones. Given that many people are repeat customers, they will be able to assist with continuous improvement of the documents, processes and outcomes of the program, yet new feedback and suggestions will be solicited in order to continuously improve the program's processes and documents.

Stakeholder Requirements Analysis

If the stakeholder sample size were increased, allowing for significantly more data to be analyzed, perhaps the results would identify a different training format, however, given that 60% of these survey respondents want more written instruction, it is a reasonable conclusion that written instructions will benefit enough applicants to be effective. Written instructions may not be the best to assist all applicants but this format will meet some identified requirements.

Some of those requirements include the need to have the information available to a large number of people simultaneously and allow them to refer to it anytime, save it, print it, and share it. While it is outside the scope of this project, it is understood to be important, and will be recommended, that the project manager include multiple face-to-face trainings and teleconferences in addition to the instruction and information manual available on the internet. Bejerano (2008) discusses that face-to-face training can affect students' retention and success. When people can ask questions and get immediate feedback as well as learn from others in the training atmosphere they tend to have more success absorbing the information. Bejerano (2008) also discusses that if students are expected to read and apply information independently, without the help of a coach or teacher, it takes a great deal of self-discipline and may not ultimately occur. This may be an issue for the RTP applicants especially if they have no grant writing experience. People completely new to the process may feel overwhelmed without face-to-face guidance. Unfortunately, this methodology, although identifiably valuable, can often be impractical given space, time, and availability constraints.

Utilizing engagement tools such as the investigative surveys, the project manager has actively involved stakeholders to identify their requirements for an effective Manual, improvements to the process, and documents and ideas for accommodating training requirements. Their feedback was collected and organized, documenting commonalities as well as anomalies. This feedback informed the writing of the Manual and will also assist with building training opportunities in the future.

The requirement to improve legal infrastructure for the program has been met on multiple fronts. Accountability language has been added to the application not only as precautionary acknowledgement of applicant responsibility but also applicant awareness. This combined with discussion of this responsibility and grant fraud prevention during applicant trainings will greatly increase awareness and correspondingly, compliance.

In addition the project manager has implemented several internal controls in potentially vulnerable areas of the program that will also help fulfill this increased legal infrastructure requirement. These will now be required steps and add checks and balances to previously un-scrutinized processes.

The identified requirement imposed by the project manager to decrease staff time coaching applicants is not expected to be measureable for some time. In fact, this improvement process will take more staff time than usual to increase training and applicant outreach. Training and improved processes and documents will help both new and returning applicants be more self-sufficient in the future.

The project manager has received approval by the State Procurement Officer for her inclusion of state procurement requirements to the application instruction manual, thus fulfilling this requirement.

Project Strategy

As outlined in the PMP the project manager conducted a literature review, researched state and federal law, consulted best practices from other RTP managers nationwide, and initiated an internal investigation with key stakeholders and subject matter experts, as well as surveying a group of RTP applicants with various levels of experience. She collected and organized the resulting data and developed a program Manual and language on the signature page of the grant application to make applicants aware of the gravity of the legal expectations and make those expectations more legally defensible in the rare case of noncompliance. All of this work was initiated to solve a couple identified problems and prove, or lay in place the groundwork to prove, the hypothesis that when applicants

have an improved means by which to meet the requirements of the grant program they will become more self-sufficient, knowledgeable, successful, and compliant.

Products

This Project created guidance and informational material in the form of a program Manual for RTP applicants in Alaska detailing the process to apply for funding and comply with federal and state fiscal regulations and programmatic guidelines. The Manual will be available on the State Trails Program website for applicants to review on August 15, 2015, prior to the application deadline for the federal fiscal year 2016 grant cycle;

Secondly, legal language was included on the grant application signature page that acknowledges an applicant's responsibility for state and federal procurement rules, regulations, and guidance as it pertains to the RTP. See Appendix B for the Application Instruction and Information Manual and Appendix C for the Applicant Accountability Language.

Application Instruction and Information Manual

The Manual is intended to accommodate any organization interested in the RTP. Although it is dense with information it is easy to follow because of its logical layout and informal language and discussion style.

The layout of the manual begins with an introduction about the RTP and the advisory board. It has a Table of Contents to assist an applicant with finding the answer to a specific question, and program background and discussion of the funding source to help build the big picture. It prioritizes, after the introduction, the most important things to know about the process or application. This idea stems from the standard structure for news or press releases. Some people may only read the first few sentences or paragraphs and move on, so an author should put most the essential information right at the beginning.

The document then continues on to discuss logistics of the application documents and where to find additional resources such as Frequently Asked Questions, Sample Score Sheet, Programmatic Agreement, Environmental Review checklist, grant reporting documents, etc. state and federal procurement rules and law including permissible and non-permissible use of federal grant funds are included as well as the definition of Grant Fraud.

The document is structured so it may be used side by side with the application. *Section 1* instruction corresponds with *Section 1* application questions, and so on. The document informs applicants of how their application will be scored and how many points each question or section is worth.

When it comes to specific section directions, for example, how to create a perfect project budget sheet, there are two example budgets and Frequently Asked Questions included. Some of this information is derived from the research and analysis surveys, some from direct customer feedback, and some comes from the manager's experience. The manual walks the applicant through the entire process including how to create and provide accurate and timely reports and be reimbursed, all the way through grant closure.

Environmental review is an important component of applicant compliance and was identified in the applicant-needs analysis to be an area where applicants would like assistance. The process is discussed and supplemented with agency contact information.

Structure, resources, and information that respond to the applicant-needs analysis were added and quality assurance and continuous improvement procedures will annually evaluate if those tools have met the identified needs and improvements by re-surveying the original group and evaluating their answers after they have had an opportunity to use the tools. Another layer of quality assurance will be to conduct future stakeholder surveys with different groups of applicants and compare those results with the initial results in order to improve future iterations of the Manual.

Responsibility Statement

Originally in the PMP an Applicant Accountability Affidavit was going to be created and implemented as a control measure. After receiving feedback from a key internal stakeholder, it was decided that a softer approach would be more appropriate and a Responsibility Statement would be substituted. This new language was included in the grant application where an applicant acknowledges responsibility for the information they provided, state and federal procurement rules, regulations, and guidance as it pertains to the RTP. This tactic accomplishes the same goal and is less offensive.

Implementation

The feedback gathered from all twenty-eight combined respondents was considered and incorporated into the Manual as was feasible and when not in direct conflict with the federal regulations and programmatic guidance. There are cases where applicants are unhappy or frustrated by things out of the control of the project manager. In those cases compliance with regulation and guidance prevail. Forty-two percent of applicant respondents wanted a shorter application with all directions in a manual instead of interspersed throughout the application document itself. The project manager was able to accommodate this and shorten the application by seven pages.

A majority of respondents from both surveys identified the budget as being one of the most difficult parts of the process. The project manager accommodated this by increasing the allowable space for the budget, having specific directions in the application instructions, providing an example of a successful budget, and including a list of frequently asked questions. She will also focus on this area in future training opportunities and encourage applicants to have her office review their draft budgets prior to final submittal.

Many respondents commented that the Environmental Review process required for federal grant programs under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) was challenging for them. While outside the scope of this project, the project manager will improve the guidance and instructions for this process and increase emphasis on this in the trainings prior to the next grant cycle. She will provide agency contacts and work with the agencies to make sure the information requested is necessary, and the forms are correct and streamlined. This effort has begun with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and they are working with the project manager to strengthen their section of the review form.

Limitations and Recommendations For Further Improvements and Changes

Limitations

The project manager is limited in the changes she can make because she must adhere to federal regulations and programmatic guidance. However, as exhibited by the many ways the RTP is managed around the country there is some flexibility and many good ideas out there to borrow from and incorporate within the required structure of regulation.

Continuous Improvement

Through the process of evaluating the management procedures used for the RTP and through research into the best practices and lessons learned from other RTP managers nationwide, in addition to instituting requirements from the new 2 CFR 200, the project manager has identified several additional areas of the program that demand improvements and change. Applicant performance measures are now required by FHWA and will be part of the upcoming changes for the FFY16 grant cycle. Adding this protocol is out of the scope of this project but will assist

with program improvement in two ways. First, having these expectations clearly laid out ahead of time improves communication of requirements with applicants and fosters an opportunity for greater success by creating a performance management system. Because these standards will be a new addition to the process, the project manager will create opportunities to coach applicants toward success and has included discussion in the Manual. These performance standards will also help with the evaluation and review process necessary prior to recommendations for funding. They will provide the advisory board with new tools against which they can measure the applications and applicant performance.

As discussed earlier in this paper the program will adopt several new internal and administrative controls to help foster continuous compliance and improvement. The project manager is aware that these cannot be static improvements but must be assessed regularly to help strengthen effectiveness.

The PMP describes the Project as having two distinct phases. Phase 1 included development of the products and Phase 2 was to implement them by posting them on the website. Phase 1 is complete but posting them to a website does not need to be a discrete phase. The real second Phase, which is outside of the scope of this project, will be the actual utilization and further improvement of the products as useful and generalizable tools.

Conclusions

This paper discussed the background of the RTP, identified the needs and goals of the project, discussed the methods used for research and analysis, and provided research conclusions. In addition this paper identified the products produced as a result of the research and how they will be utilized to continuously improve the program and its processes.

The project set out to accomplish two overarching goals, to help applicants become more accountable and help the RTP become more efficient. As discussed earlier in this paper, the predominant reason this project was initiated was to assist the majority of grant applicants with processes, regulations, and guidelines, increase comprehension and success, and reduce management time coaching and frustration of applicants. To a lesser degree but intended to mitigate a higher risk, this project researched, created, and added supplementary legal language into the application that will serve to both add a layer of legal protection for the DNR and remind applicants of their fiscal responsibilities when managing federal grant funds.

A secondary result of the research and analysis for this project is the development and adoption of multiple administrative and internal control measures as simple but meaningful tools that will also bolster the continuous improvement process.

Applicant Accountability

By including a statement of responsibility in the application the management team has employed an internal control to shift some risk and responsibility to the applicants and away from DPOR. Adding language to the application and requiring applicants to confirm their knowledge and responsibility may not actually make them more accountable, but may serve to make them aware of the gravity of the requirements and make the program's administration more legally defensible in the case of a program audit. The project manager learned that the conditions were ripe for grant fraud to occur and between the pro-active management of increased instruction and administrative controls, those conditions are now mitigated.

Process Efficiency

By surveying the management team members and the applicants the project manager was able to increase her knowledge of the risks and challenges associated with the RTP. With these inputs she was able to design and create a comprehensive Manual which is offered publically for all applicants or those interested in learning more about the

program. The project manager will solicit applicant feedback at a minimum of once a year with the intent of developing continuous and iterative process and document improvement.

Requirements not identified and communicated is the underlying reason for applicant frustration and dissatisfaction. In addition, the increased tightening of these requirements has been uncomfortable for many. The most difficult part of this for the project manager has been that the requirements and expectations were not always clearly communicated to her and were identified through trial and error when working with the FHWA. Because of this it was not possible for the project manager to communicate these requirements to the applicants, making the process very inefficient.

Now that the program manager has experience with the new federal and state requirements she was able to incorporate those into an instruction manual and will be coaching applicants prior to the submittal date in November. This is anticipated to greatly improve the efficiency of the entire process. There is bound to be iterative change as new restrictions and requirements, and stakeholder needs are identified. The manual will annually reflect these changes.

Acknowledgements

I want to acknowledge and thank the brilliant women who made up my advisory committee, for whose advice, insights, and expertise I am very grateful. Those women are Dr. Paula Donson, Valerie Pettit, and my primary advisor and MSPM Department Chair, LuAnn Piccard.

I want to thank the members of the MSPM teaching staff, LuAnn Piccard, Roger Hull, and Dr. Seong Dae Kim. Their help, guidance, and instruction over the years has been inspirational and enjoyable.

I want to thank my wonderfully supportive husband, Chet Harris, who, having graduated from the program himself, was an invaluable resource and very patient friend.

I want to thank my project sponsor, the Director of the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Mr. Ben Ellis for his support for me doing this project.

I want to thank MSPM program staff members who have been invaluable in assisting me with all the logistics of occasionally participating remotely, meeting my scholastic requirements, and following the UAA regimen.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Research Data

Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project Internal Management Team: Survey Data

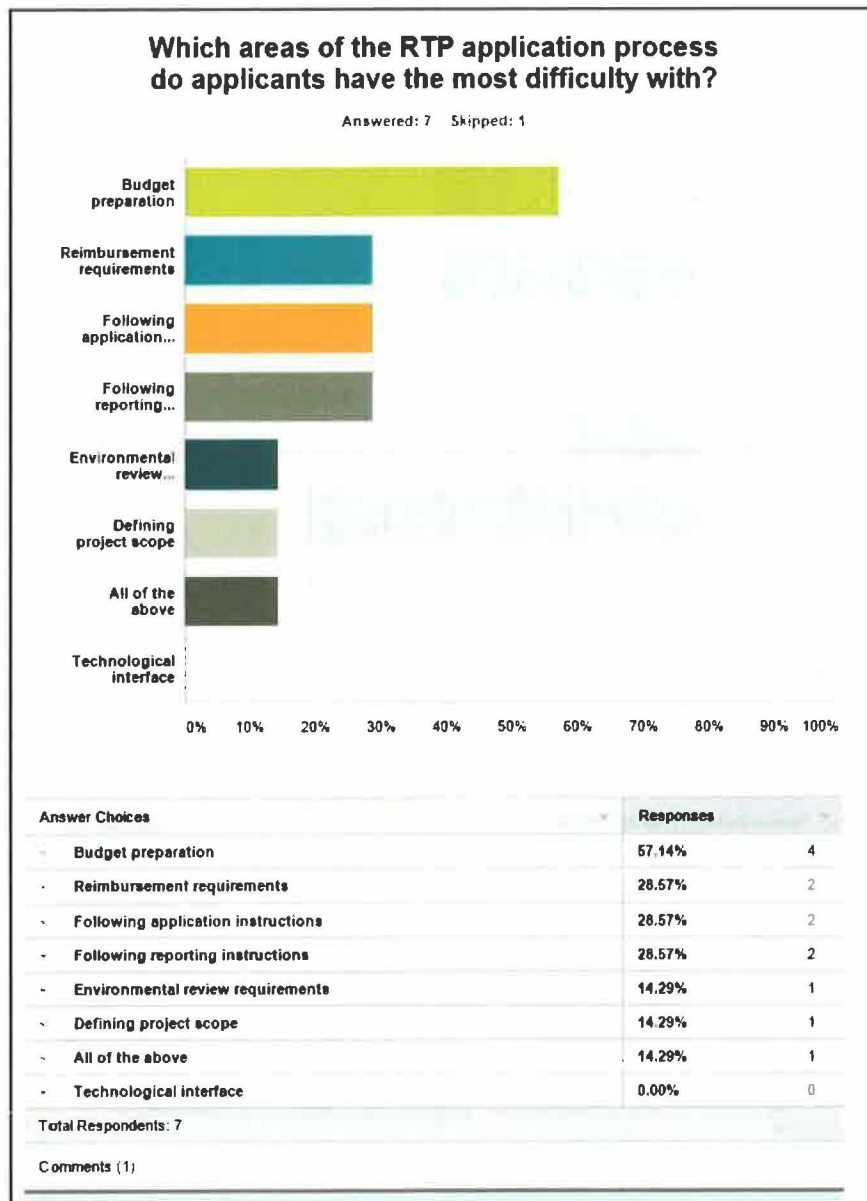
Summary

Internal Management Team Survey Data Summary by Topic	
Environmental review assistance	2
Budget assistance	11
Reimbursement/ Reporting assistance	3
Schedule/Scope assistance	1
Procedural	1
Technology	1
Assistance needs	18
Administrative	2

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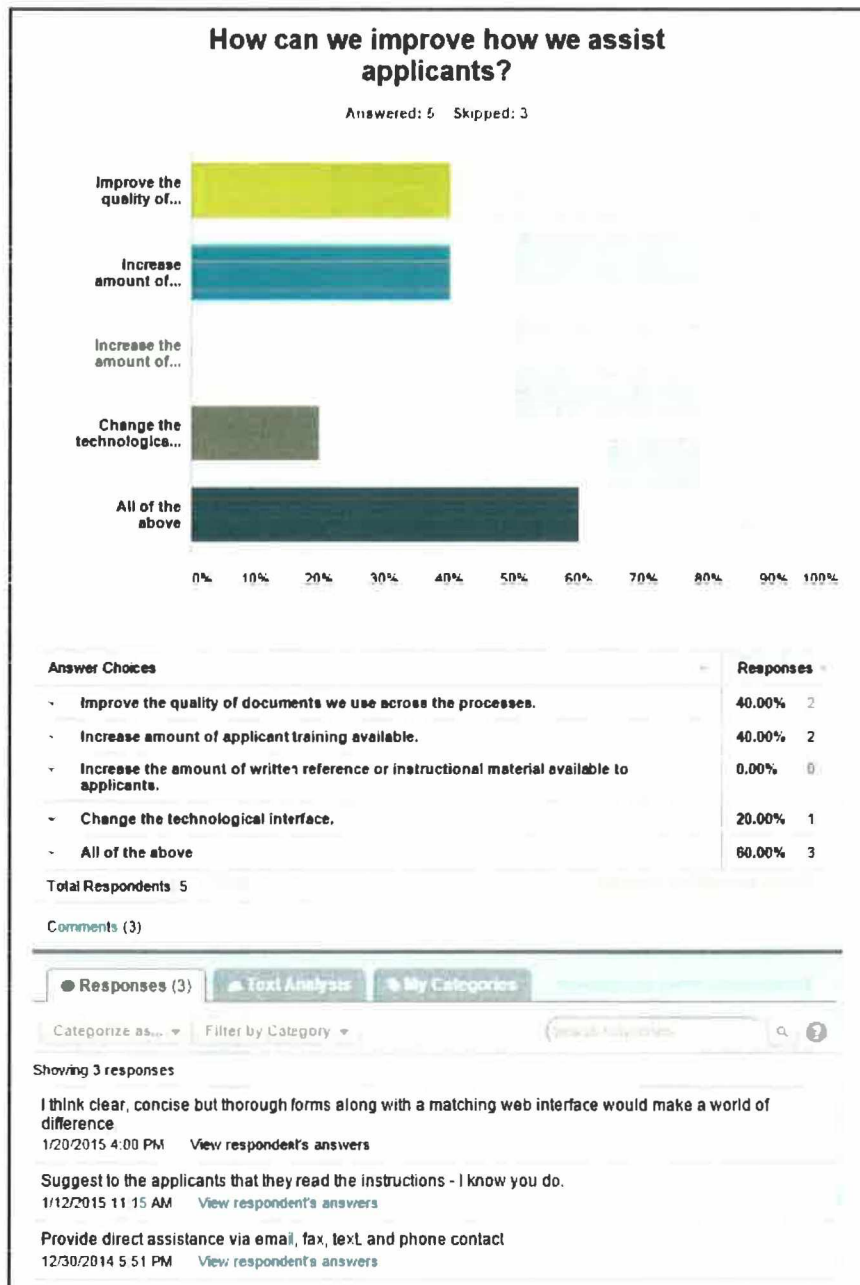
Appendix B



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Appendix B



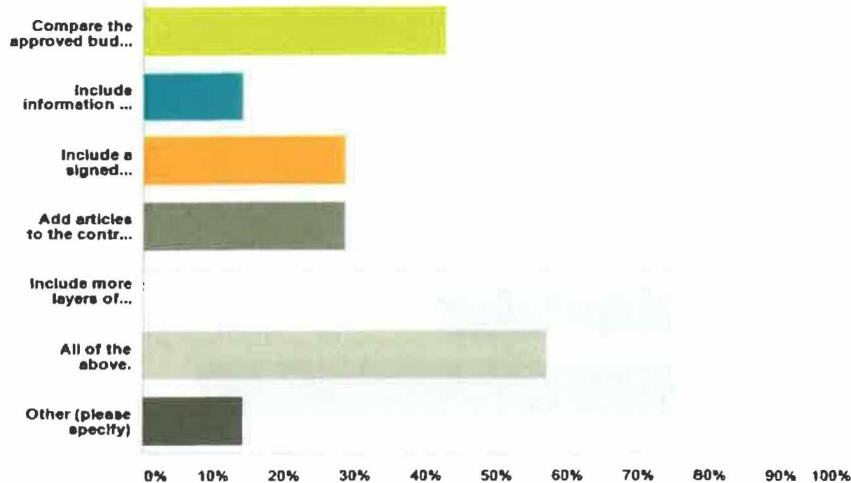
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Appendix B

What administrative controls can we include and employ to ensure grant contract compliance?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
Compare the approved budget to the reimbursement request.	42.86% 3
Include information in the Application Instruction and Information Manual that discusses grant fraud, and contract compliance.	14.29% 1
Include a signed affidavit of responsibility to the required documents for application so applicants know from the beginning that they are going to be responsible for federal grant money and what that entails.	28.57% 2
Add articles to the contract directing responsibility for compliance back to grantee.	28.57% 2
Include more layers of oversight and approval.	0.00% 0
All of the above.	57.14% 4
Other (please specify)	14.29% 1

Responses (1)

Text Analysis

My Categories

Categorize as...

Filter by Category

Search (optional)



Showing 1 response

Referencing or including requirements and responsibilities is necessary, but not sure affidavits are sending a positive signal to applicant

1/20/2015 4:00 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

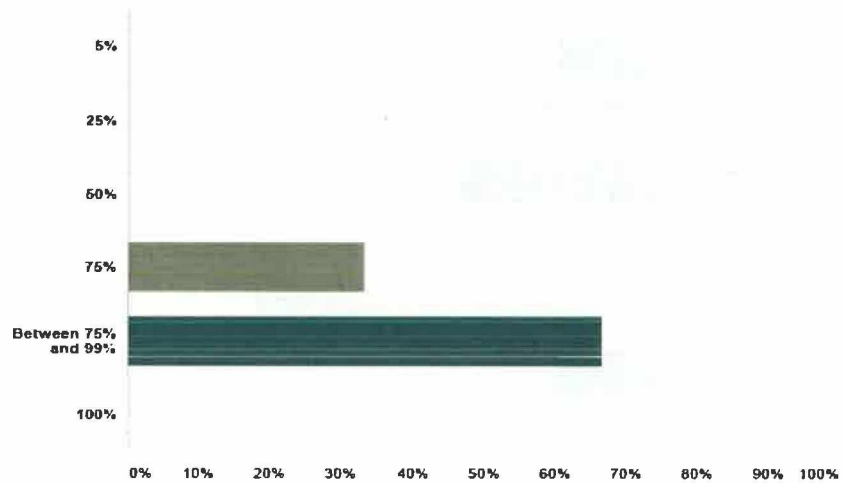
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Appendix B

If you have experience with this, in your thoughtful opinion, what percentage of applicants need assistance with producing an adequately detailed and complete application?

Answered: 3 Skipped: 5



Answer Choices

- 5%
- 25%
- 50%
- 75%
- Between 75% and 99%
- 100%

Responses

0.00%	0
0.00%	0
0.00%	0
33.33%	1
66.67%	2
0.00%	0

Total

3

Comments (2)

Responses (2)

Text Analysis

My Categories

Categorize as...

Filter by Category

Search

?

Showing 2 responses

10 %

1/12/2015 11:15 AM

[View respondent's answers](#)

don't know

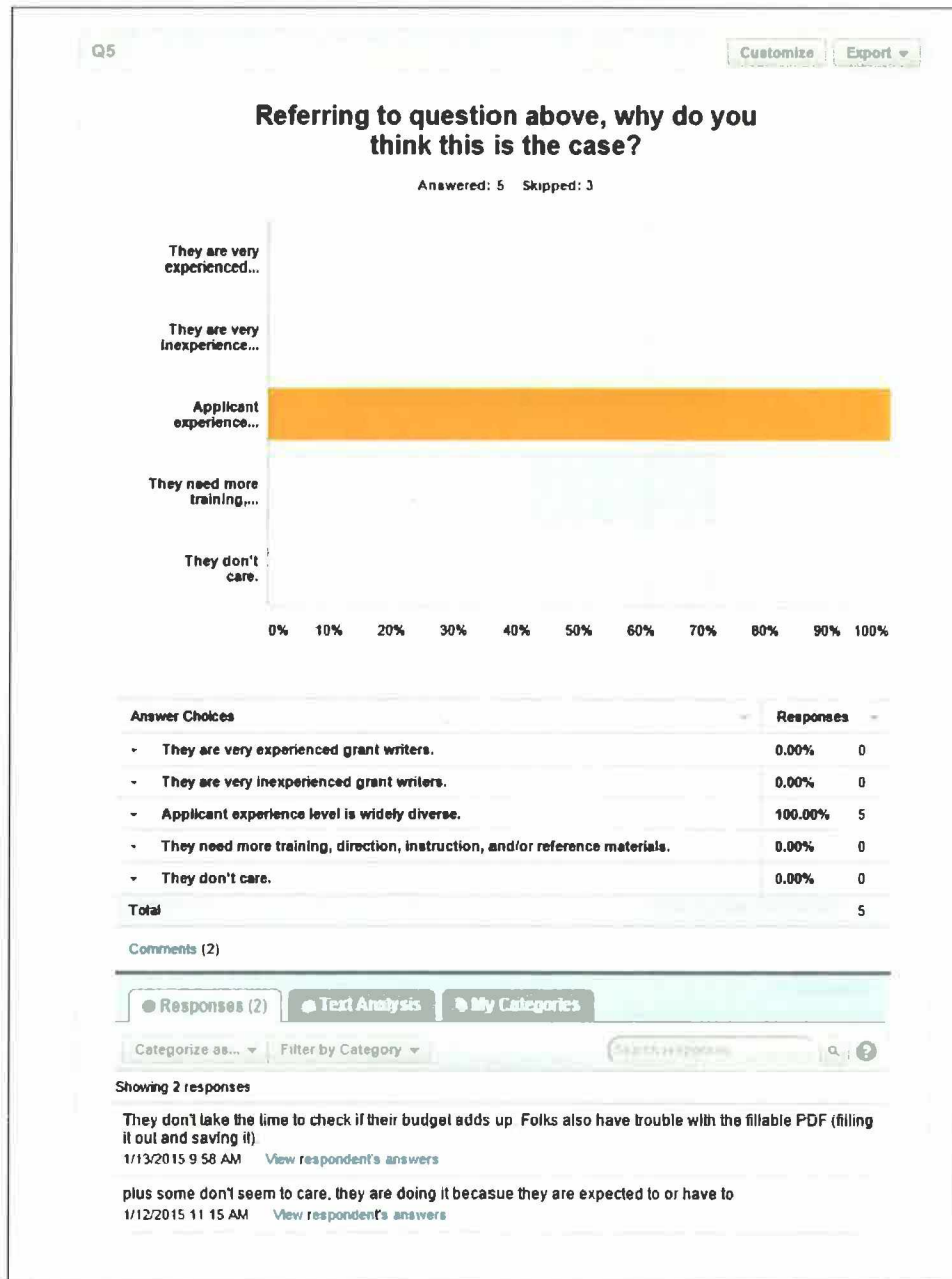
12/30/2014 5:51 PM

[View respondent's answers](#)

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Appendix B



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Appendix B

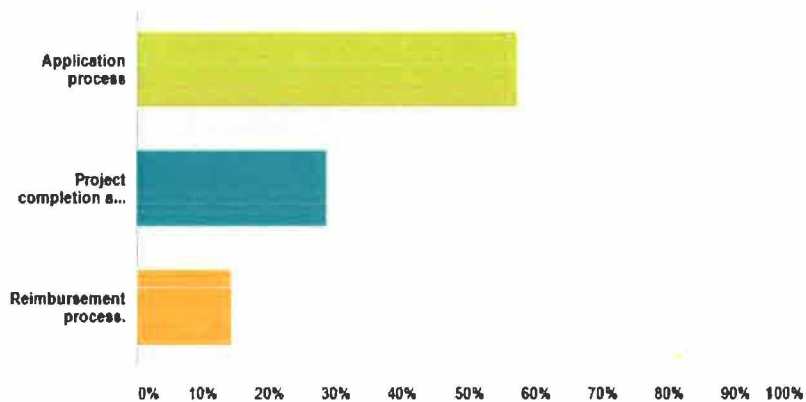
Q6

Customize

Export ▼

What is the process area where applicants seem to need the most assistance?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
Application process	57.14% 4
Project completion and adherence to approved scope/schedule/budget.	28.57% 2
Reimbursement process.	14.29% 1
Total	7

Comments (1)

● Responses (1)

🔍 Text Analysis

📁 My Categories

Categorize as...

Filter by Category

Search by response

🔍 ?

Showing 1 response

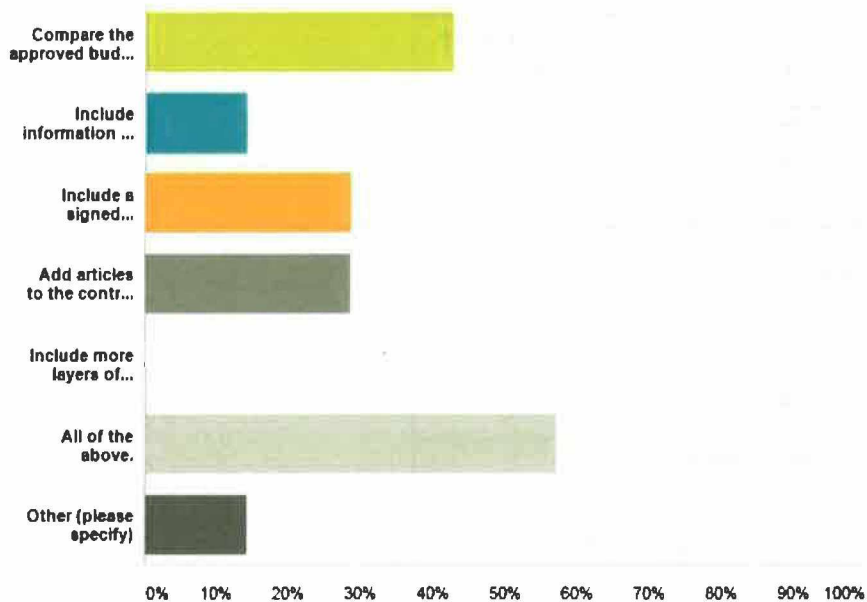
this is the only side I see

1/12/2015 11:16 AM

[View respondent's answers](#)

What administrative controls can we include and employ to ensure grant contract compliance?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
✓ Compare the approved budget to the reimbursement request.	42.86% 3
✓ Include information in the Application Instruction and Information Manual that discusses grant fraud, and contract compliance.	14.29% 1
✓ Include a signed affidavit of responsibility to the required documents for application so applicants know from the beginning that they are going to be responsible for federal grant money and what that entails.	28.57% 2
✓ Add articles to the contract directing responsibility for compliance back to grantee.	28.57% 2
✓ Include more layers of oversight and approval.	0.00% 0
✓ All of the above.	57.14% 4
✓ Other (please specify)	14.29% 1
Total Respondents: 7	

**Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process
Efficiency Project
Applicant Need Analysis: Survey Data**

Summary

Applicant Needs Assessment Survey Data Summary by Topic	
Environmental review assistance	13
Budget assistance	21
Reimbursement/. Reporting assistance	13
Schedule/Scope assistance	3
Procedural changes wanted	7
Technology changes wanted	9
Assistance/Instructions changes wanted	28
Administrative changes wanted	19

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MSPM 686B SPR 2015

Appendix B

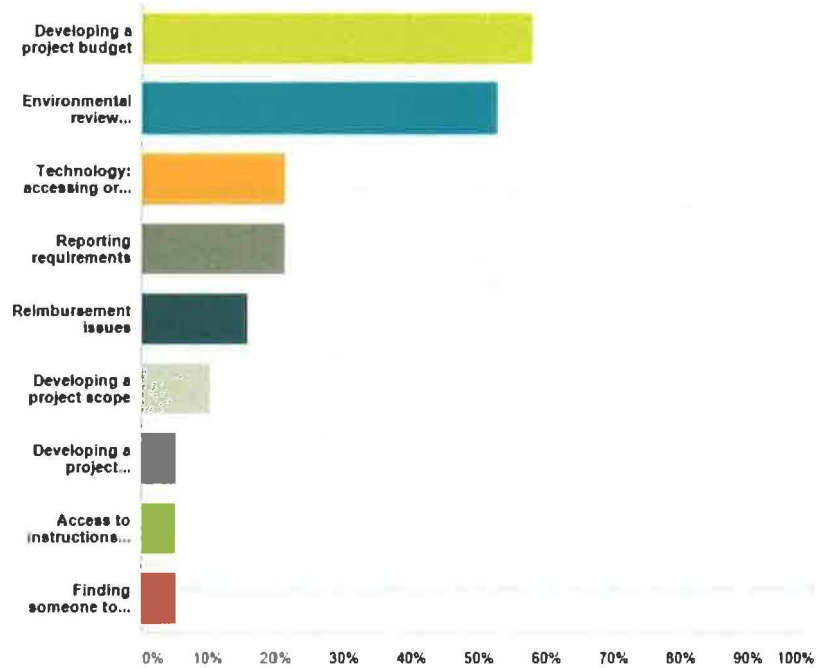
Q1

Customize

Export ▾

What have been your biggest challenges when applying to the RTP?

Answered: 19 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
Developing a project budget	57.89% 11
Environmental review requirements	52.63% 10
Technology: accessing or working with available documents	21.05% 4
Reporting requirements	21.05% 4
Reimbursement issues	15.79% 3
Developing a project scope	10.53% 2
Developing a project schedule	5.26% 1
Access to instructions or training	5.26% 1
Finding someone to answer my questions	5.26% 1

Total Responses: 19

Comments (4)

Total Respondents: 19

Comments (4)

● Responses (4) Text Analysis My Categories Results

PRO FEATURE

Use text analysis to search and categorize responses; see frequently-used words and phrases. To use Text Analysis, upgrade to a GOLD or PLATINUM plan.

[Upgrade](#) [Learn more >](#)

Categorize as... Filter by Category Search responses

Showing 4 responses

Allowing enough time to gather required documentation and to complete the application

1/22/2015 9 41 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Conflicting information from instructions and program staff.

1/16/2015 3 47 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Reporting is what the head shed complains about. The environmental review isn't that bad. Sometimes certain projects need sign offs that obviously aren't germane. Ex: a wetlands determination in rocky alpine terrain.

1/16/2015 10 52 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

application wasn't always friendly with Mac - I think it's fixed

1/12/2015 6 40 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

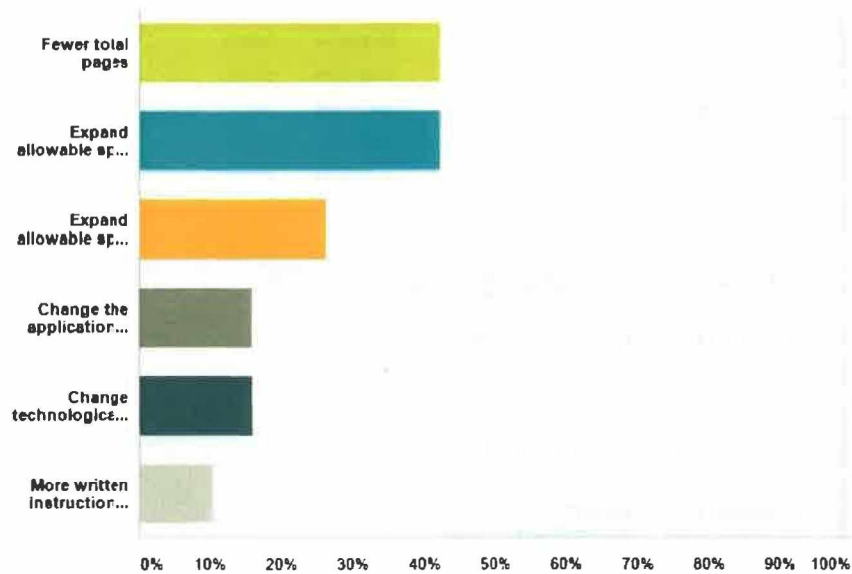
Q2

Customize

Export ▾

How would you like to see the application document improved?

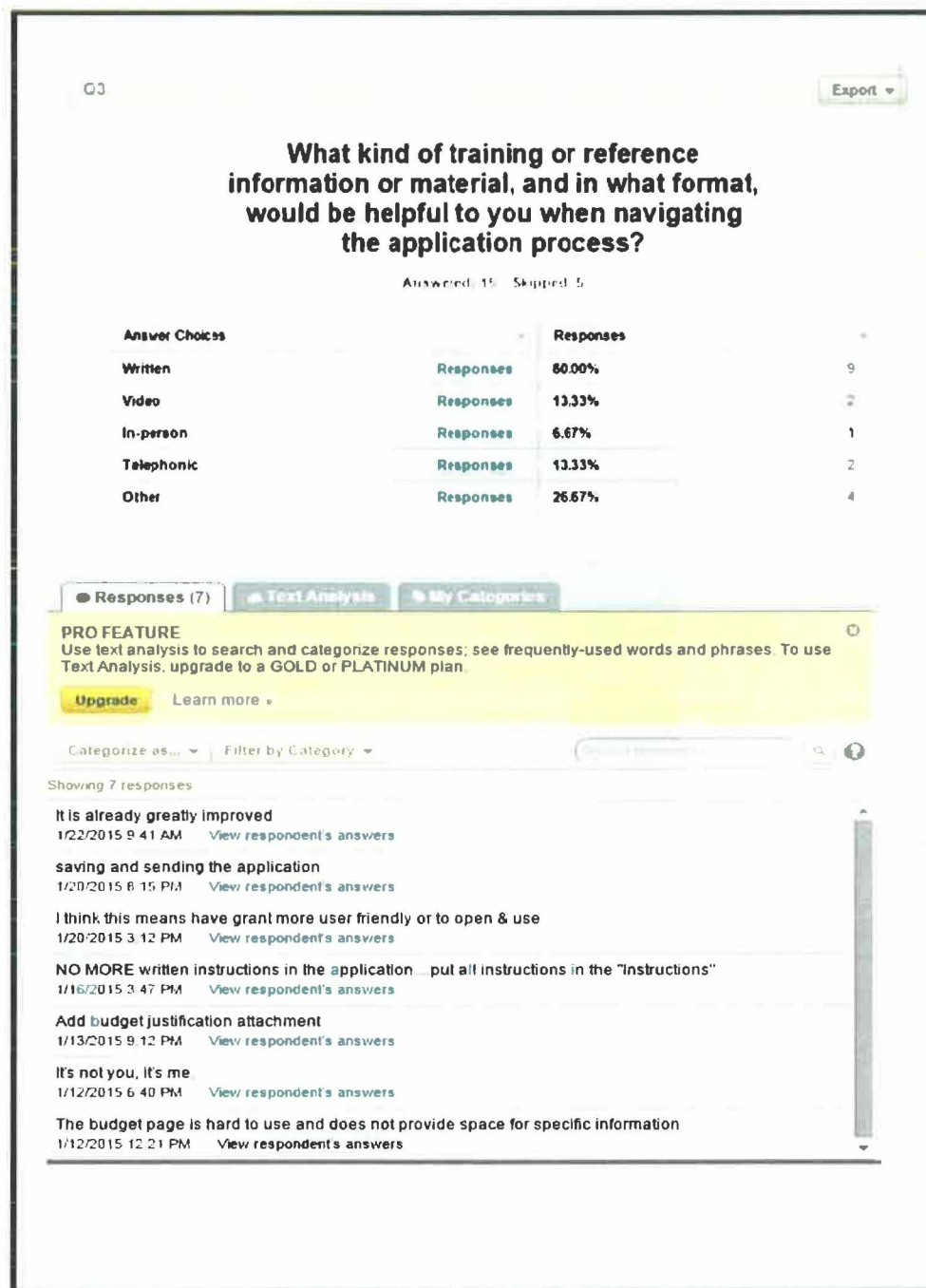
Answered: 19 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
▼ Fewer total pages	42.11% 8
✓ Expand allowable space for budget sheet	42.11% 8
▼ Expand allowable space for project narrative	26.32% 5
▼ Change the application layout	15.79% 3
▼ Change technological interface. If you check this answer please enter your preference for technological interface in the "Other" box below.	15.79% 3
✓ More written instruction within the application document	10.53% 2

Total Respondents: 19

Comments (7)



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Appendix B

Q3
Export

What kind of training or reference information or material, and in what format, would be helpful to you when navigating the application process?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 5

Answer Choices	Responses
Written	60.00%

Responses (9)

Text Analysis

My Categories

PRO FEATURE
Use text analysis to search and categorize responses; see frequently-used words and phrases. To use Text Analysis, upgrade to a GOLD or PLATINUM plan.
[Upgrade](#) [Learn more »](#)

Categorize as... Filter by Category

Showing 9 responses

Maybe one application for all both grants isn't very user friendly
1/20/2015 3:12 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The available instructions worked fine for me.
1/16/2015 10:52 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

How scoring is broken down and what it takes to achieve full scoring.
1/14/2015 7:31 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Yes
1/13/2015 9:12 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

examples of reports
1/13/2015 4:33 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Word program via computer program
1/12/2015 5:19 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Enviromental review requirements
1/12/2015 12:56 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Video	Responses
	13.33%

Responses (2)

Text Analysis

My Categories

PRO FEATURE
Use text analysis to search and categorize responses; see frequently-used words and phrases. To use Text Analysis, upgrade to a GOLD or PLATINUM plan.
[Upgrade](#) [Learn more »](#)

Categorize as... Filter by Category

Showing 2 responses

short tutorial
1/20/2015 5:02 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Examples of successful projects
1/14/2015 7:31 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

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MSPM 686B SPR 2015

Appendix B

In-person
Responses
6.67%
1

Responses (1)
Text Analysis
My Categories

PRO FEATURE
Use text analysis to search and categorize responses; see frequently-used words and phrases. To use Text Analysis, upgrade to a GOLD or PLATINUM plan
[Upgrade](#)
[Learn more »](#)

Categorize as
Filter by Category

Showing 1 response

Better coordination between Federal Highways RTP and Grant recipients Especially regarding project start dates
1/12/2015 12:34 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Telephonic
Responses
13.33%
2

Responses (2)
Text Analysis
My Categories

PRO FEATURE
Use text analysis to search and categorize responses; see frequently-used words and phrases. To use Text Analysis, upgrade to a GOLD or PLATINUM plan
[Upgrade](#)
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Categorize as
Filter by Category

Showing 2 responses

Steve Neel is easily accessible
1/29/2015 8:15 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

help number
1/29/2015 3:34 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Other
Responses
26.67%
4

Responses (4)
Text Analysis
My Categories

PRO FEATURE
Use text analysis to search and categorize responses; see frequently-used words and phrases. To use Text Analysis, upgrade to a GOLD or PLATINUM plan
[Upgrade](#)
[Learn more »](#)

Categorize as
Filter by Category

Showing 4 responses

More examples like those offered in 2014 - excellent idea
1/26/2015 7:58 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

A brief explanation of why a grant is rejected will help grant writers gain experience
1/22/2015 9:41 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

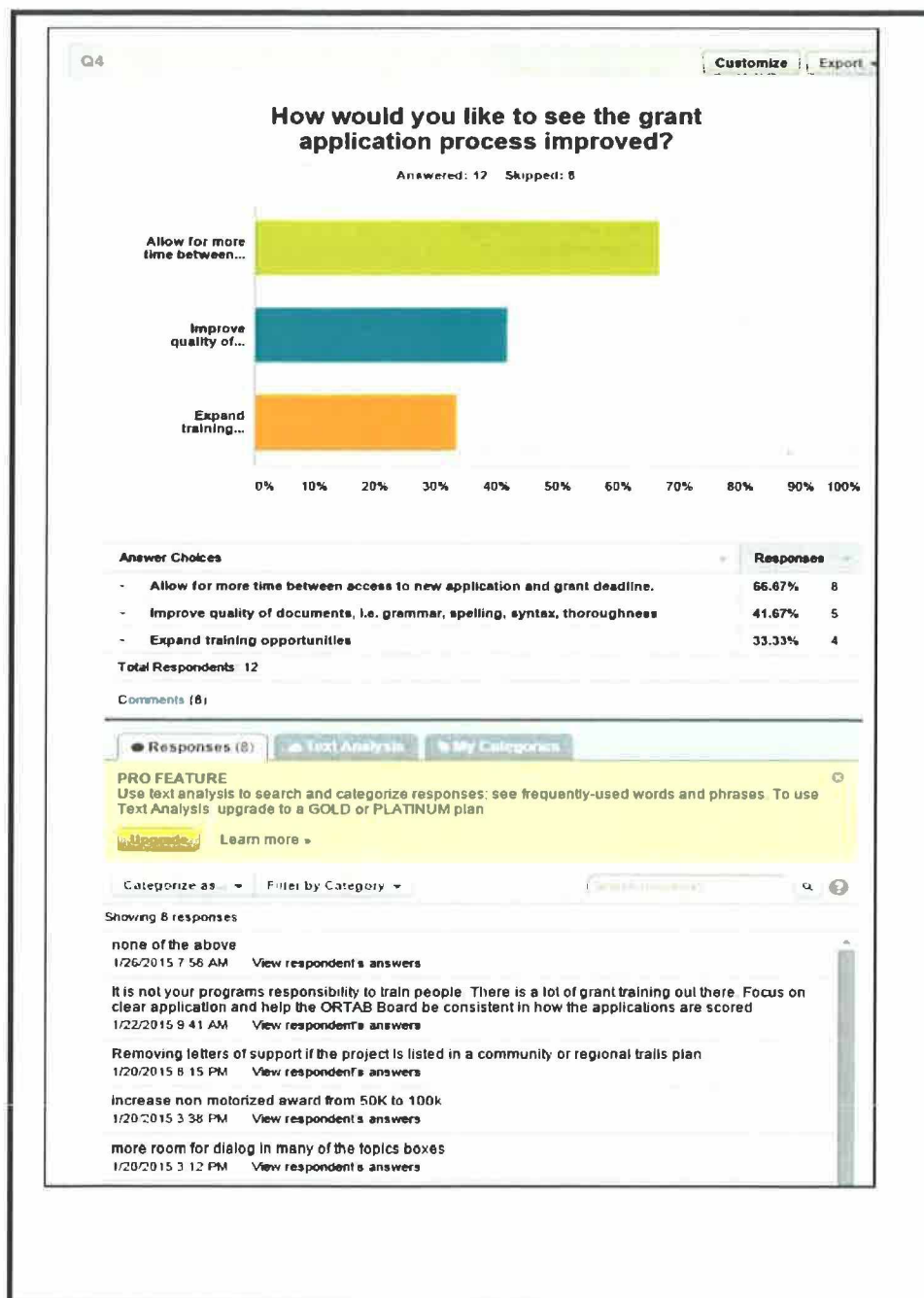
You did a good job answering questions via email!
1/28/2015 3:12 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

You all are fantastic and answer in detail Very professional
1/12/2015 6:40 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Harris, Darcy

MSPM 686B SPR 2015

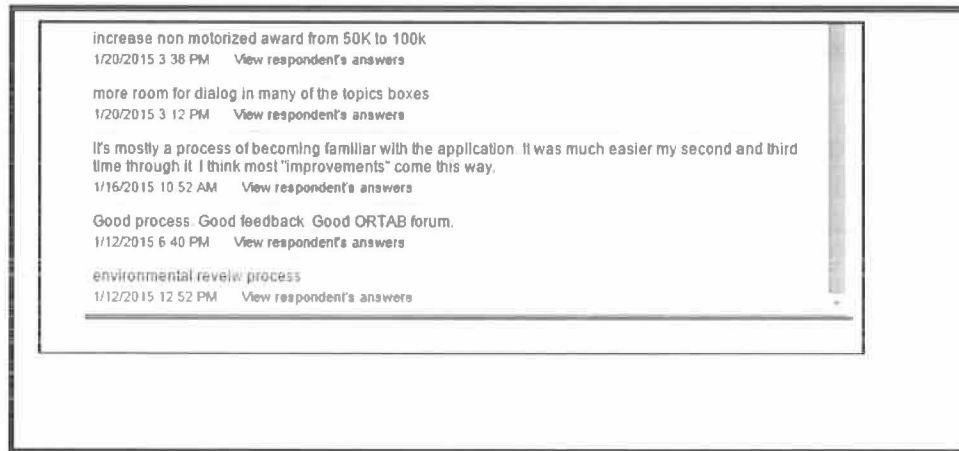
Appendix B

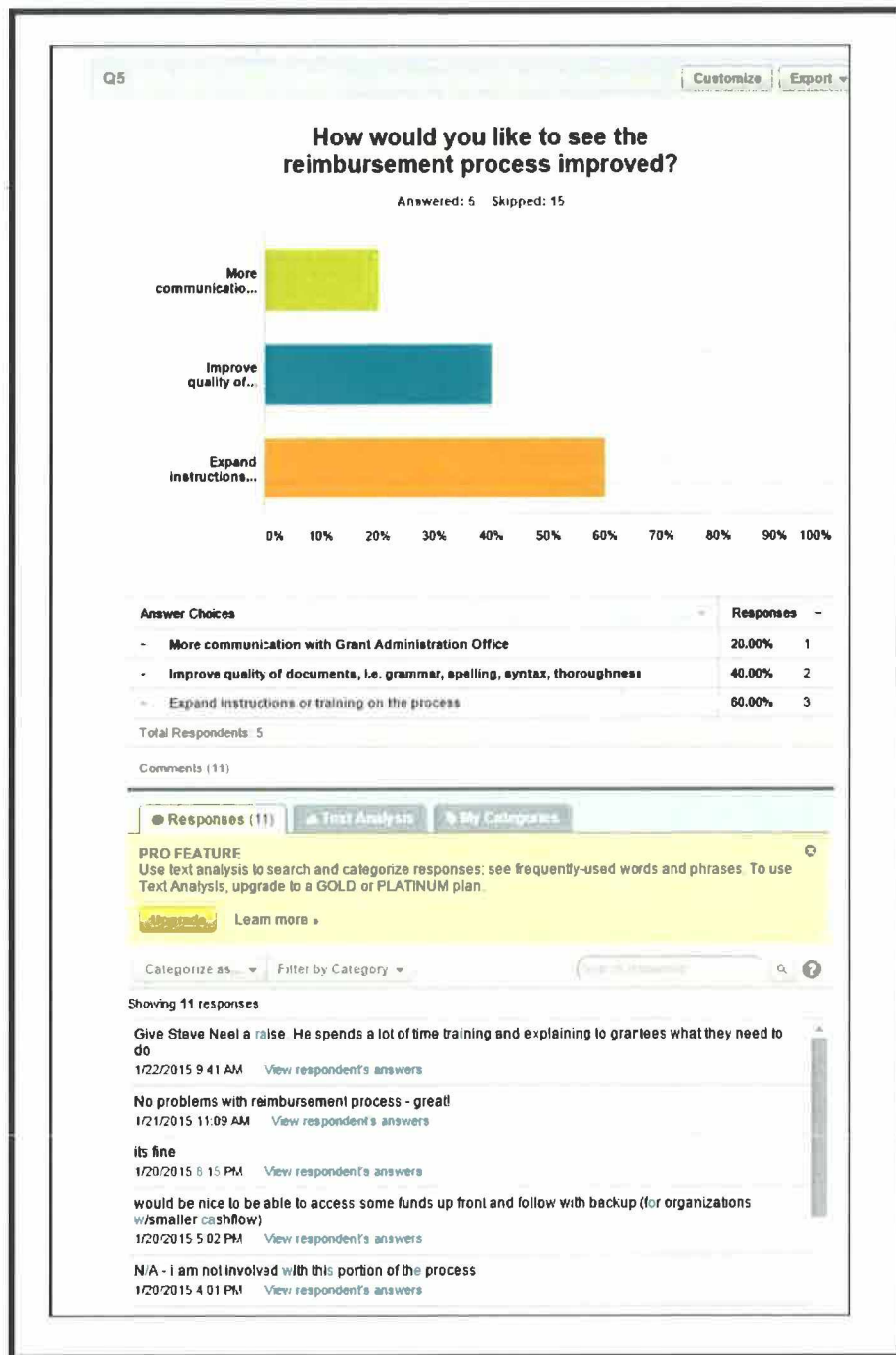


Harris, Darcy

MSPM 686B SPR 2015

Appendix B

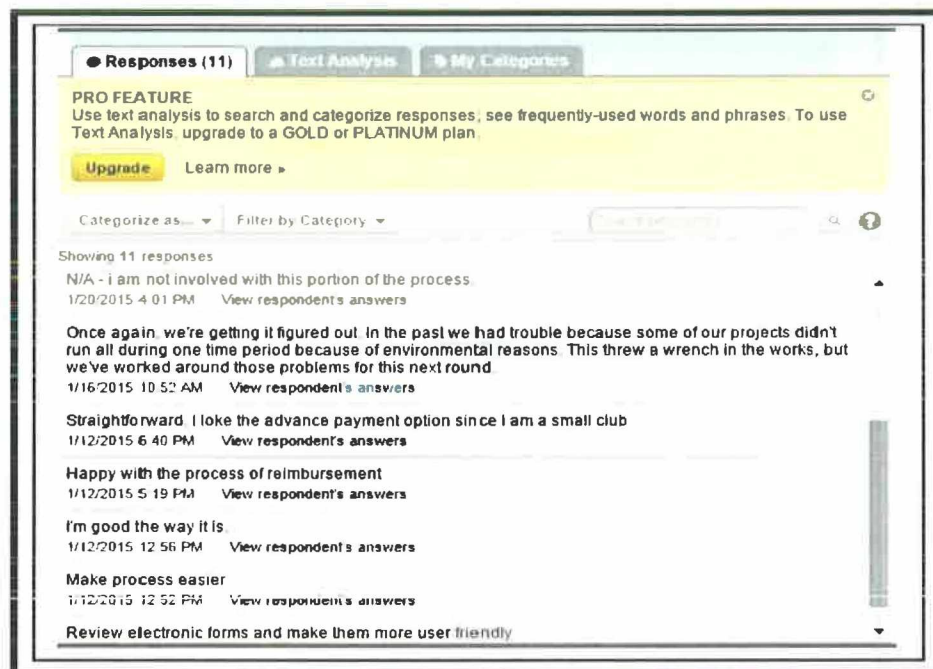




Harris, Darcy

MSPM 6868 SPR 2015

Appendix B



Q6

Export

How can the State Trails Program Office help improve your experience with the process from application through reimbursement?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 2

Responses (18)

Text Analysis

My Categories

PRO FEATURE
Use text analysis to search and categorize responses; see frequently-used words and phrases. To use Text Analysis, upgrade to a GOLD or PLATINUM plan.

[Upgrade](#) [Learn more](#)

Categorize as

Filter by Category

Search responses

Showing 18 responses

Adjusting timelables for Alaska specific construction timelines. Many trails have been rushed to completion due to budget deadlines (not always the fault of RTP). Trail builders should really be wrapping up native soil tread work by 9/15 of each year.
1/26/2015 7:58 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Have clearer instructions for applying for permits and have the correct phone numbers for permitting agencies.
1/22/2015 10:05 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

I think it is a good program.
1/22/2015 9:41 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

It would be wonderful if grants would be considered for funding seasonal trail staff.
1/21/2015 11:09 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Consist and easy guidelines for the budget. The past year with Fed auditors was a pain. More flexibility with the budget since things change from the application to project construction. This is a Fed issue, though.
1/20/2015 8:15 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Categorize as

Filter by Category

Search responses

Showing 18 responses

As a submitter and reviewer of RTP grants I found that the application and review process didnt seem to flow/mesh well. The first 10 pages or so have a lot of extraneous/duplicative information which ends up being included in the application. It takes up real estate when you are only allowed to submit 50 pages, and as a reviewer you have to wade through it. Requiring three quotes up front for construction costs is difficult. Tough to convince contractors to provide the bids when there is no guarantee that the project will even be funded. Its not like you are calling to ask the price of an item to be purchased off the shelf. I believe using historical project costs to justify the budget is more accurate and doesnt tick off your potential bidders.
1/29/2015 4:01 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

fill out NEPA after award of grant.
1/29/2015 3:38 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

User friendly document=accessibility, space to write.
1/29/2015 3:12 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Provide clear instructions. If something is a MUST, make it a MUST. Some applicants devote a lot of time to following the direchons yet are compared to applicants that did not submit complete applications.
1/16/2015 3:47 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Harris, Darcy

MSPM 686B SPR 2015

Appendix B

Categorize as
Filter by Category

Showing 18 responses

Any stream-lining would help. It took me about 40 hours for the two RTP applications. A manageable amount, clearly worth the effort for what we're potentially getting, but we'd hate to see that cost go up.

1/16/2015 10:52 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Feedback after the process is complete, seeing how the ORTAB board scored the application. Understanding where the subjective areas of the application are located and how to achieve full scoring.

1/14/2015 7:31 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I understood 80/20 match was required over the life of the project, but only later found out it was required for each reimbursement. This was a surprise and is challenging me.

1/13/2015 9:12 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I think a training on reporting and requesting reimbursements would be helpful for grantees.

1/13/2015 4:33 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

This is the best grant process I have encountered, and I have gone through 10 in Alaska. I like that there are options for funding, but I don't really like the EXACT AMOUNT matching requirements. Nothing is exact, and projects are in constant flux. I think setting a minimum is fine, but in excess should be accepted.

1/12/2015 6:48 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I've always had good response whenever I email a question or problem, appreciate the communications.

1/12/2015 5:19 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Earlier notification on grant approval would be helpful. The time line is tight between notification and construction season start up.

1/12/2015 12:56 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Simplify &/or re-design the ER programmatic agreement stipulations - there are things in step#2 that should be categorically excluded.

1/12/2015 12:52 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The reporting forms require specific information but the technology and format often makes it hard to provide this information. Other than that my experience has been great.

1/12/2015 12:21 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Appendix B: Application Instruction and Information Manual

Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

Recreational Trails Grant Program



Application Instructions and Information

Revised April 2015



The Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR) administers the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). DPOR offers this competitive, reimbursable and matching trail grant for developing and maintaining public recreational trails and related facilities, and for safety and educational projects.

The Outdoor Recreation Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB) reviews grant applications and makes grant-funding recommendations to the Director of DPOR.

These instructions are intended to provide information and application assistance to grant applicants as well as describe the requirements for participation in this program, the application process, and administration of the grant through project completion.

Please read this document carefully.

Questions concerning this program and these application instructions should be directed to the DPOR Grants Administrator or the State Trails Program Coordinator.

We look forward to working with you to develop your trail grant application.

Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1380

Anchorage AK, 99501-3561

Information can also be found on our website:

www.alaskastatetrails.org

Table of Contents

Program Introduction.....	5
Program Background.....	5
Funding Source	5
Part A: IMPORTANT ITEMS YOU NEED TO KNOW.....	6
Frequently Asked:	6
Grant Cycle.....	6
Community Involvement	7
Consequences.....	7
Ask Questions	7
Tentative Approval.....	7
Only One Application Choice.....	7
Permissible Uses of Funds	7
Public Benefit	7
Permissible uses	8
Non-Permissible Uses of Funds	8
Overhead and Indirect Costs (NEW)	9
Grant Fraud.....	9
Part B. Application Process	9
Application Submittal.....	9
Procurement and reimbursement guidance.....	10
Federal Office of Management and Budget Circular 2 CFR 200 (NEW)	10
Grant Agreement.....	10
Period of Project Performance (NEW).....	10
Force Account Labor and Little Davis Bacon:	11
Davis-Bacon:	11
Procurement:.....	11
Equipment Purchase:.....	12
Buy America (NEW).....	12
Disadvantaged Business Enterprise:	12
Grant Funding Amounts	13
Matching Requirement for the Recreational Trails Program.....	13
Reimbursable Programs	13
Property and/or Easement Acquisition.....	13
Public Access	14
Land Management Plan.....	14
Environmental Review	14
ADA Accessibility (access for people experiencing different abilities and access impediments).....	15
Application Review.....	16
Application Assistance.....	16
Grantee Performance Standards (NEW)	16
Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board	16
Evaluation Criteria	16
Multiple open grants	17
Application Sections.....	17
Section 1: Qualifying Criteria.....	17
Section 2: Sponsor Introduction and Identification.....	17
Section 3: Public Access Documentation:	17
Land and / or Easement Acquisition:	17
Project Location and Map Documentation.....	17
Section 4: General Project Information	18
Amount of Funding Requested:.....	18
Project Summary:.....	18
Project Category:	18
Types of Use	19

Trail Information.....	19
Detailed Project Narrative:	19
Section 5: Timeline of Proposed Activities:	20
Section 6: Proposed Budget:	21
Section 7: Project Funding and Sponsor Financial Support:	24
Section 8: Public Benefit	24
Section 9: Community Support:.....	24
Public Notice and Map.....	24
Section 10: Sponsor (applicant organization) Commitment:	25
Past Grant Performance:.....	25
Section 11: Permits and Authorizations	25
Section 12: Checklist for Completion	25
Section 13: Certified Signature	25
Grant Management and Administration	26
Grant Agreement.....	26
Extensions (NEW)	26
Terminating a Grant	26
Appendix A: DNR, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation Contacts	27
Appendix B: Agency Contacts for environmental review checklist (ERC).....	28
Appendix C: Frequently Asked Questions	31

Program Introduction

Program Background

These instructions will guide applicants through the grant application process for the RTP. The purpose of the RTP is to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities in Alaska for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. Grant funds are available for recreational trail development and repair, and environmental protection and safety/education programs relating to recreational trail use (please refer to specific definition in Part A of an eligible Safety/ Education project). This program offers 80/20 federal matching funds on all projects, except for Alaska State Parks who uses a 90.97/9.03 match ratio.

This program is unique in that, legislatively it is specified that 30% of the funds must be expended for projects that are strictly motorized, 30% will be spent on projects that are strictly non-motorized, while at the same time encouraging the development of projects that provide for multiple uses, 40 % must be spent on projects called *diversified*. Of the funds available for the RTP, a maximum of 5% may or may not be used for safety and education focused projects and it is up to the state to make this decision. This program was first funded in 1993 through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and was called the National Recreational Trails Fund. Since that time, this program has funded over 440 trail projects in Alaska, and over 20,500 trail-related projects nation-wide, including urban greenways, nature centers, and horse, hiking, mountain bike, and motorized trails, as well as snow and water routes.

Funding Source

The RTP is funded from the Federal Highway Trust Fund managed by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), which is funded from a percentage of federal fuel taxes. That money is allocated through the current Highway Transportation Bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP 21) where it continues the Recreational Trail Program as part of federal surface transportation funding.

Part A: IMPORTANT ITEMS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Frequently Asked:

- This is a reimbursement program; therefore the grant recipient must pay 100% of the cost for any eligible project line item before submitting a request for reimbursement.
- A recommendation for funding is not a guarantee of funding. Only projects that meet the public benefit criteria defined in Part A of this document, demonstrate an appropriate state of readiness to begin work (shovel-ready), and have been recommended by the Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB) and the Director of the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation will be forwarded to the FHWA for formal approval.
- Non-profit organizations and public agencies are eligible to apply for the RTP grants. (Businesses and individuals are not eligible for the RTP).
- Current grantees may not have two grants open concurrently with the same scope of work or exact title. Current grantees are eligible to apply for completely different projects or different phases of the same larger project. (EX: Happy Trail phase 1 and Happy Trail phase 2 could be considered two distinct projects even though the names are similar, if the project scopes were sequential phases of the same project.) These phases may not be open at the same time.
- Applicant has obtained, or is in the process of obtaining, (ex: early-entry authorization) landowner authorization for project work from all relevant landowners whose land the project crosses, unless the project is for safety and education or an equipment purchase, and has no land impact.
- Per 23 U.S.C 206 All trail development projects must have support from, or be generally referred to in a land management plan that has been adopted by a local government, state or federal agency. Source and specific language must be included with this application. Please refer to the current Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for support.
- Projects should have a resolution of support from a local governing body. This can be a Tribal Council, Community Council, Municipal or Borough Assembly, etc.
- All projects will need three letters of support from local community organizations or the public if they are **(NEW) not** within a designated State Park area. Those projects within State Park areas please include **one letter** from the Citizen's Advisory Board showing that this project has priority in your Park. If you are submitting letters, **please limit** your submission of support letters to 3.

Grant Cycle

- Application documents are available August 15th at this location: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm> . Please use new and updated documents. Outdated applications will not be accepted.
- Mandatory public notice posting deadline: **October 15.**
- Applicants must submit their application to the State Trails Program Coordinator **BOTH** electronically and by mail. All applications must be received electronically (by email) November 15 **AND** postmarked by November 15th, unless you are unable to send it electronically, and have made special arrangements to only mail a hard copy.
- Applications sent to ORTAB mid-December
- ORTAB meeting in Anchorage, January or February
- Tentative Award Announcements – March
- Agency Review – March/April

- Grant Agreements – Dependent on agency review and federal approval, before September 31 (end of federal fiscal year).

Community Involvement

Before applying for a grant, it is important to spend some time discussing project needs, goals, and expectations with your local trails community. Garner user support. A little pre-planning will pay dividends down the way. Start small and do not overestimate what you can accomplish. Many larger projects fail because they are too ambitious and do not have clear goals or agreements among important stakeholders.

Consequences

Consider potential consequences of your project such as environmental, historical, and archaeological impacts (these must be documented and minimized), permits (you may need to obtain various permits prior to obtaining approval), and possible opposition (some people may oppose your project for various reasons, including concerns about property rights, liability, safety, or historic and environmental impacts). An applicant should review the work plan and staff resources to assess a contractor's ability to take on the proposed project.

Ask Questions

DPOR staff is available for assistance with grant application and technical assistance until the application deadline. Contact information is located in Appendix A.

Tentative Approval

After the ORTAB makes their funding recommendations RTP awards are tentatively approved by DPOR. At that time, applicants will be notified of tentative approval and must wait for FHWA project determination and funding approval. Notice of tentative approval is not a guarantee of funding. After FHWA has completed its review and signed the federal agreement, DPOR staff will execute a grant agreement with successful applicants. Funds will not be available for reimbursement to any applicant until state and federal agency review is complete and environmental review conditions are satisfied. Any money spent on a project BEFORE a signed grant agreement is in place will not be reimbursable. Please also see the *Procurement and Reimbursement Guidance* section in Part B of this document or call for details.

Only One Application Choice

Trail Development, Maintenance, Acquisition and Assessment projects, and Trail Safety, Signing, and Education projects now use the same application. If you are applying for a Safety, Signing, and Education project, please check the appropriate box in Section 4, Project Category, of the application, AFTER you read the Definition of a Safety and Education Project in Part B of this document or below in the Permissible uses section to ensure your project fits the criteria.

Permissible Uses of Funds

Public Benefit

All projects using federal grant funds must have public benefit, be accessible, open and available to the general public, or targeted to a broad segment of the general public. Federal grant funds should not be used for projects that have such limited capacity that only a few paying (or potentially paying) guests have access to the product of the project. The portions of a project using federal grant funds must be open for general public use or viewing at all times and when visitors are likely.

Due to the variety of project proposals, it is possible that while a proposed project may satisfy the eligibility and rating criteria, the completed project may not provide adequate public trail use opportunities. Therefore, the DNR reserves the right to disqualify proposals in which:

1. Costs exceed the general public benefits.
2. The project only benefits a small number of people.
3. The project is not shovel-ready.
4. The site requires intensive and high-cost future management.
5. Any other situations where the public benefit will not justify the federal investment.
6. Adequate control and tenure of property is not provided.
7. The project manager failed to post the mandatory public notice.

***This list is not comprehensive and other reasons for disqualification may be determined as projects are reviewed. When a project is disqualified for any reason, the project sponsor will be notified in writing.

Permissible uses

Trail Development, Maintenance, Acquisition and Assessment

Development and repair or restoration of existing trails,
 Development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities, bridges, signs, and trail linkages,
 Purchase and lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment, (check rules for match requirement)
 Construction of new trails (with restrictions for new trails on Federal lands),
 Acquisition of easements or property for trails, and
 Assessment of trail conditions for accessibility and needed repair.

Safety, Signing, and Education Projects

Development and dissemination of publications and operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to the use of recreational trails, including supporting non-law enforcement trail safety and trail use monitoring patrol programs, and providing trail-related training (limited to 5 percent of a State's apportionment, but not required). These projects must offer training or materials either free to the general public, or at a very minimal cost, also see Public Benefit section below. All reimbursable expenses must be allocated to educational materials.

Allowable Labor Costs (NEW)

Labor costs, including force-account labor and contractual services costs that are directly related to and required for completing the project are acceptable and may be reimbursed. Costs shall be based on the actual wage or services rate paid. Project management, project administration, and all indirect costs are ineligible.

Non-Permissible Uses of Funds

Grants are for general public purposes and benefits (see *public benefit* section in this document). They are not intended to provide financial gain to any individual, business, or organization. Applicants must comply with all ordinances, laws, and regulations. Misappropriation of grant funds, or other fraudulent activities may result in criminal prosecution and loss of eligibility to apply for future DPOR or FHWA grants.

Grant funds may not be used exclusively for planning, assessment, engineering, or designing. Grant funds may be used for some project planning, assessment, engineering, or design costs as long as those costs are incidental to one of the permissible project types listed above. The rule of thumb is that this money is intended to be put on the ground in the form of a recreational trail asset (shovels in the soil). If your project can be put in a binder on a shelf and forgotten, it will not meet the intent of this program. Furthermore, grant funds may not be used for planning, designing, developing, or maintaining paved sidewalks and trails along roads, which are primarily intended for transportation rather than recreation. An exception would be a trail that forms an important missing link between two existing recreational trails or recreational trail segments, or trails in rural parts of Alaska used for transportation, subsistence, and recreation.

Grant funds may not be used to pay for food, drink, gratuity, tax, or court costs involving litigation.

However, these costs (except for alcohol) may be documented and used as part of the matching requirement if they are directly related to the accomplishment of the proposed project, and if they are incurred within the grant term. Only approved budget items will be permissible uses of grant funds.

******The one exception is food for remote spike camps essential for the completion of the project. If the crew cannot go home at night or access places to buy food, then it is considered remote. These food costs must be clearly identified in the proposed and approved budget as such, and must be reasonable and non-excessive (basic camp food, not steak and lobster). This spike camp food may not simply be identified as “*per diem*” or “*subsistence*”. These terms have different and ambiguous meanings and should be clarified.

Overhead and Indirect Costs (NEW)

This grant is intended to maximize money on the ground in the form of trails and associated facilities for the maximum number of people. The regular operating expenses such as rent, building upkeep, utilities, and all fixed costs associated with a supporting a non-profit, agency, or club will not be allowed. Only direct costs that can be identified specifically with a particular final cost objective directly related to a trail project are eligible.

Grant Fraud

A grant agreement is a legally binding contract; grantees are obligated to use their grant funds as outlined in the agreement and to act with integrity when applying for and reporting their actual use of funds. Grantees are also obligated to properly track the use of the funds and maintain adequate supporting documentation. If you are not sure what constitutes federal grant fraud, and what the associated consequences are, please feel free to contact our office or visit one of the following websites:

<http://www.grants.gov/documents/19/18249/Grant+Fraud/76cd8f66-7036-475c-9f13-b7a89a00444b>

<http://www.justice.gov/oig/hotline/docs/GrantFraudPresentation.pdf>

<http://www.justice.gov/oig/>

Part B. Application Process

Application Submittal

Trail Development, Repair, Acquisition, and Assessment projects, and Trail Safety, Signing, and Education projects now use the same application. Please use the **NEW** application and instruction manual available each year after August 15. The link to the fillable .pdf application is available on the State Trails Program website: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm> . Many of these requirements have come from the advisory board. **Hint:** your project may score better if you follow directions and the reviewers find it easy to go through your application package.

1. Each applicant should submit a bound (with paper clip only) and doubled-sided paper-copy application for each project. Consider keeping one complete copy for your files. Please do not put pages in protective sleeves or binders, or staple. This makes it very labor-intensive to reproduce.
2. Each applicant should submit an electronic copy of the entire application, excluding large reference documents, to which one can simply reference and include a link to its online location, if available. If you are unable to send the application electronically, contact the State Trails Program Coordinator prior to the due date to arrange sending only a paper copy. After submission, make sure you have received a confirmation email that your application has arrived in a useable form by the due date. Applications submitted in an unusable format will NOT be considered for funding. If there are any questions about submitting the application please contact the program staff.
3. Each application should include all pages and all necessary supporting documentation, in the same order and clearly labeled as outlined in the application. Please clearly label with letter **AND** title of attachment to help the reviewers find the attachments. This will allow DPOR staff and the ORTAB to work through the review and evaluation processes more effectively and efficiently.

4. In addition, please include **ONE .pdf of the entire package scanned in order**. This was a special request by the ORTAB.
5. Submitting your application with these criteria will allow for the application and approval notification timelines to be met as quickly as possible. Because there are commonly over 40 RTP applications the ORTAB and DPOR staff are required to review and score, please adhere to these requests AND limit your application to about 50 pages.
6. Please include the name of your project in the subject line of **every** email about your project. We have up to 100 RTP grants open at any one time and this helps us to keep track of each specific grant. If you label your email "RTP grant" it is **not** specific enough.

Procurement and reimbursement guidance

Federal Office of Management and Budget Circular 2 CFR 200 (NEW)

The newly adopted Office of Management and Budget (OMB) "Super Circular" 2 CFR 200 took effect December 26, 2014. State, local and tribal governments, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions must follow the cost principles outlined in OMB circular 2 CFR 200. The following web address is a link to the entire circular: <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=2:1.1.2.2.1>. The new general guidance from this CFR is interspersed throughout this instruction manual. If you have specific questions about how this may affect your particular project please contact the State Trails Program Office.

Grant Agreement

DPOR will execute a grant agreement with each successful applicant, and the grant agreement will set forth terms and conditions of the funding award, including a budget. Grant agreements are reimbursable. That is, DPOR will reimburse a grantee for expenditures provided that expenditures meet applicable laws and regulations, and are detailed in the approved budget and schedule prior to expenditure. To be eligible for match, project costs must be incurred after the federal project approval date.

Reimbursements will only be made within the grant's period of performance. Therefore, money cannot be spent on your project with the expectation of reimbursement, until a grant agreement is in place, which requires the signatures of both the applicant and DPOR.

One Exception: The only costs incurred prior to federal project approval that are eligible for retroactive reimbursement of the match requirement are architectural/engineering, archaeological literature search, or environmental review permits (such as a SWPPP or MLW land use permit) that were included as pre-agreement costs in the grant application. Donations of equipment, labor, cash, and materials must be contributed after federal grant approval.

By signing the grant agreement, the grantee promises to abide by the grant contract's terms and conditions. A grantee must comply with all applicable ordinances, laws, and regulations. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the new 2 CFR 200 Circular from the OMB for additional information on cost principles associated with federal grant programs. Misappropriation of grant funds can result in criminal prosecution and loss of eligibility to apply for future DPOR grants. Please also refer to the sections on non-permissible uses of funds and grant fraud.

Period of Project Performance (NEW)

Plan ahead! This program is intended to fund "shovel-ready" projects. The grantee's agreement with DPOR has a maximum two (2) year term, unless otherwise specified or amended. ***However, in order to avoid appearance on the FHWA "Inactivity" list, there must be at least one significant project billing within 10 months of FHWA grant approval (the date FHWA signs the agreement- **NOT** the date that you sign the agreement with DPOR). A grantee should avoid this list because to FHWA it is the first step toward de-obligation of project money. Please plan your project accordingly. If you have questions about this please contact the State Trails Program Office.

Plan ahead! According to 2 CFR 200 the applicant must choose a project end date for the approved grant contract with FHWA and DPOR. This date will be unchangeable unless there is significant scope change or serious circumstances out of the grantee's control (major earth quake, flooding etc. - NOT simply leftover funds) and an official project amendment is made with and approved by FHWA. Any significant changes that require an amendment from FHWA will trigger establishment of a new federal aid package.

Plan ahead! All reimbursement requests must be submitted to DPOR within 30 days of the project end date that you choose. At that time the DPOR will request reimbursement from FHWA. At 90 days after the final project completion date, no more reimbursement will or can be made.

Force Account Labor and Little Davis Bacon:

Grantees performing project work with their own employees or volunteers, otherwise known as *force Account labor*, are not subject to the Little Davis Bacon Act (LDBA) requirements. However, if the grantee enters into a subcontract to perform a public construction project, the project will be subject to LDBA requirements. A public construction project is defined in [AS 36.95.010\(3\)](#). Without the existence of a contractual relationship between the grantee and a third party performing the work, Alaska Title 36 does not apply. For more information and to request a determination, please contact the [State Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Labor Standards and Safety Division, Wage and Hour Section](#) (contact information can be found in the State Agency Review section of these instructions).

Davis-Bacon:

Any RTP project within the right-of-way of a federal-aid highway must pay prevailing wages to all non-volunteer labor. If a proposed project includes work within an existing highway, contact the Alaska Department of Transportation to determine if the highway is a federal-aid highway. If it is, the applicant must contact the Alaska Department of Labor for prevailing wages for the project location. These wages are the minimum to be paid on the project. A contract for the labor must be made prior to the beginning of construction. The applicant should be aware that these wages are subject to change and the correct wages must be verified by contacting the appropriate regional office of the [Alaska Department of Labor, Wage and Hour office](#).

Procurement:

Grantees are required to procure supplies, materials, equipment, and services in a manner that is fair and reasonable (think: you are spending your own money); if the grantee works for a state agency, they must also follow the State of Alaska procurement law. The grantee shall attempt to solicit at least three quotes when the purchase price for equipment or an individual supply or material order is over \$1,000. For purchases of equipment over \$5,000 and having a useful life greater than one year, all grantees must have federal and state approval prior to purchase. Applicants should remember to include shipping and freight costs, if applicable. Reminder: for state agencies, the \$5,000 procurement limit includes all shipping and handling charges. Please refer to the General DNR Procurement Requirements in the table below. If you have any questions please contact the State Trails Program Office BEFORE you buy.

General DNR Procurement Requirements

Order Value	Minimum Quote Requirements	Purchase Document Requirements	Payment Document Requirements
Less than \$1000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Solicit Alaskan first ➤ Common Sense ➤ Pretend you are spending your own money and you are on a tight budget. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Verbal orders OK ➤ Delivery Order (DO) required for "class A" property — see your Property Custodian ➤ Copy of DO to DNR/SSD/Admin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Coded and approved invoice listing items and costs
From \$1000 up to and including \$5,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Solicit Alaskan first ➤ Reasonable and adequate competition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Written Order Document (DO, Stock Request, PO, etc.) recommended. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Coded & approved invoice referencing order number if one was issued

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Solicit 3 verbal or written quotes whenever possible ➤ Complex purchases should be in writing, i.e. construction, maintenance or more complex equipment / services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Delivery Order (DO) required for all property items – see Property Custodian ➤ Copy of order to DNR/SSD/Admin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Written order document if one was issued
Greater than \$5,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Submit purchase requisition (PR) to DNR/SSD for processing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Written Order Document will be prepared by DNR/SSD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Coded and approved invoice referencing order/contract number to DNR/SSD.

***Reminder: If you are caught violating the rules, you will be judged in accordance with DNR policies and procedures and AS 36.30, the State Procurement Code, AS 36.30.930.

Equipment Purchase:

Equipment purchased with grant funds is the property of the State of Alaska, and must continue to be used for the purposes specified in the specific grant agreement. When equipment is purchased with grant funds, DPOR staff will issue an inventory tag for placement on the equipment and the equipment will be listed in DPOR's equipment inventory. The grantee is responsible for all maintenance and care of the equipment for the useful life of the equipment or five (5) years whichever is shorter. If a grantee is no longer using the equipment for the purposes of the grant, the state, at its option, may request the grantee refund to the state the current market value of the equipment, return the equipment, or transfer the equipment to another organization that will use it for the purposes originally intended in the grant.

Buy America (NEW)

"Buy America", which is specific Congressional Law for USDOT funding, is different than "Buy American". Buy America provisions apply to steel and iron products that will be purchased with RTP funds and permanently incorporated in a project funded under Title 23 including Recreational Trails Program projects. This includes trail construction and grooming equipment, bridges, large culverts, sleds, ATVs, Snowmachines and attachments, trailers, etc. All manufacturing processes, including application of a coating, must occur in the United States. Steel materials of foreign origin may be used up to a total project value of \$2,500. This threshold applies to the entire project regardless of fund source. If the value of steel or iron on a project exceeds \$2,500, the project sponsor shall submit a certification from the supplier(s) that the steel was manufactured and processed in the USA. This certification must be presented prior to requesting reimbursement for these costs. If your organization wants to purchase a unique piece of equipment only manufactured outside the United States a waiver must be submitted. A waiver must consist of clearly described reasons that address the following provisions why foreign steel must be purchased.

1. (Purchasing otherwise is) Inconsistent with the public interest.
2. (The equipment or materials are) not produced in the US in sufficient quantities and satisfactory quality.
3. (Purchasing foreign steel is 25% cheaper) domestic steel will increase the cost by more than 25%.

There is no template for a waiver and no list of "approved" manufacturers or distributors. Each circumstance is evaluated on a case-by-case basis and posted on the FHWA website for public review. These waivers are only reviewed and approved by FHWA on a quarterly basis and can take months to be complete. If you think you will need a waiver for your project please begin the process as soon as possible. Get more information about the Buy America Act and review other projects requesting waivers at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/construction/contracts/waivers.cfm>.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise:

To participate in the RTP, grantees must comply with Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) stipulations and are expected to make good faith efforts to provide DBEs with the opportunity to compete for work. The Department of Transportation, Civil Rights Office, maintains an up-to-date list of qualified DBE firms, including information on services offered and firm contact information. To obtain DBE

information, visit the following web page at <http://www.dot.state.ak.us/cvlrts/directory.shtml>.

Compliance with DBE requirements will be the responsibility of the applicant. Should the applicant have any questions on the DBE requirements, please contact the Department of Transportation, Civil Rights Office at (907) 269-0846.

Grant Funding Amounts

Grant funding amounts may be requested for non-motorized and diversified projects up to \$50,000; the minimum requirement is \$5,000. DPOR has increased the motorized trail project limit to \$100k; the minimum requirement is \$5,000. To qualify, these motorized projects must be for development or improvement of predominantly motorized trails (not just purchasing machinery to be used on a non-motorized trail). If you have questions about if your project idea will qualify, please call the State Trails Program Office.

Matching Requirement for the Recreational Trails Program

This program allows for a federal grant share of 80% for most applicants. The applicant is responsible for the remaining 20% of the total project cost. The matching share may include volunteer labor, in-kind services, cash donation of private funds, or materials and services at fair market value. Federal agencies applying for grant funds must provide a 5% non-federal match of the total project cost. **NOTE: This program offers a match ratio for Alaska State Parks' projects of 90.97/9.03.**

The budget sheet will **NOT** auto calculate match for you. Please Do Not try to show more than the required match on your application. It may encourage FHWA to change your match ratio.

Match Formula: Grant Funds Requested (divided by) 80% = Total Project Cost
Total Project Cost (times) 20% = Match Requirement. **Please use a calculator and be certain your match amount is correct on your budget sheet. This will save time later if your project is approved.**

For example, \$50,000 requested in grant funds (federal share) will have a total project cost of \$62,500 ($\$50,000 / 80\% = \$62,500$). To determine the match requirement of 20%, $\$50,000 / 80\% = \$62,500 * 20\% = \$12,500$. Therefore, this project's total project cost = \$62,500, and the match requirement = \$12,500, with grant funds providing \$50,000 of the project.

IMPORTANT: If you are using volunteer hours for match, the work those volunteers do must be included in the scope of the proposed project. **For example:** Your project is to buy a piece of trail construction equipment. Building a segment of trail using that equipment with volunteer labor **MUST** be within the written and approved scope of work if you are going to use those volunteer hours as match. If you do not have any project work identified in the scope of your project and it is just to buy a piece of equipment for trail work, the match must be cash. If you identify future, unconfirmed, volunteer work as match for equipment in this manner your application **will not move forward** to the next stage of review.

Reimbursable Programs

Successful applicants must execute a Grant Agreement with DPOR **prior** to beginning the project. Expenditure cannot occur with the expectation of reimbursement until a Grant Agreement is in place. This requires signatures from both the Grantee and DPOR. Reimbursement can only be awarded for expenditures incurred within the grant timeframe. Applicants are required to expend funds and complete portions of the project before applying for reimbursement.

Note: It is important to clearly document all expenditures throughout your project to guarantee a smooth reimbursement process. When submitting documentation for reimbursement, the grantee must ensure that the expenditures are within the project scope and on the approved budget within 10% of the estimated cost. Paystubs and receipts, not invoices, will be required.

Property and/or Easement Acquisition

If an application proposes to purchase property, the application must include legal descriptions of the property to be acquired, names of property owners whose property is to be acquired, and a letter from

property owners indicating their willingness to sell. If a grant is approved for acquisition, additional coordination will be required.

Public Access

The public must be assured legal access to trails and trail related facilities developed or maintained with RTP funds. If any portion of a trail project is on private land, the applicant must obtain documented permission from the landowner for public access for a minimum of 5 years (into the future). Projects on public land must have documented approval from the land manager and access assured for at least 10 years (into the future). The grant applicant must obtain these assurances prior to submitting an application. If the grant is for winter access, public access need only be assured for the life of the grant. **Applications missing landowner permission to access will be considered incomplete and ineligible.**

Land Management Plan

Proposed projects should be a community or area priority or referred to by type in an area land management plan and not just be ad-hoc. Within the application, provide documentation that the proposed project is in some type of land management or area use plan approved by the local government or governing body in the project area. For example the project may be listed as a community priority in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan or SCORP. There will be a new SCORP issued before the end of 2015.

Environmental Review

Every applicant must fill out an Environmental Review Checklist (ERC) unless they have a “*categorical exclusion*”. This checklist is part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and is required by federal law. This shows the reviewers that the applicant has gone through the process of thinking about the environmental impacts of their proposed project and has contacted all of the necessary agencies, and acquired or begun the process to obtain, all necessary permits or authorizations. Some answers on the ERC may be “not applicable” or “no” – this is OK.

A “*categorical exclusion*” is defined under Stipulation 1 of the [Programmatic Agreement](#) as

- Purchase of trail maintenance equipment, materials and supplies
- Rehabilitation contained within the footprints of existing trails and trailhead facilities, including resurfacing or improving the trail facility surfaces.
- Re-grading within the footprints of existing trail and/or parking areas
- Striping and/or re-striping of existing trail facilities
- Development and distribution of educational materials
- Replacement, renovation, and/or rehabilitation of existing signs, kiosks, and markers
- New installations of signs, kiosks and markers at existing facilities
- Minor alterations to existing facilities in order to make them accessible to elderly and handicapped persons.

According to the RTP guidance, a categorical exclusion is “*an action which does not induce significant impact to planned growth or land use for the area, require the relocation of significant numbers of people, have a significant impact on any natural, cultural, recreational, historic, or other resource; involve significant air, noise, or water quality impacts, have a significant impact on travel patterns, or otherwise, either individually or cumulatively, have any significant environmental impacts.*” FHWA and DPOR have developed a Programmatic Agreement, which categorically excludes identified projects from the NEPA process. Under “Grant Forms” on the Trails Program web page, <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>, refer to both the [CFR 771.117](#) and the [Programmatic Agreement](#). If your project qualifies under Stipulation 1 ONLY, you have a “categorical exclusion” and will not need to fill out an ERC. If your project qualifies under Stipulations 2 or 3 of the Programmatic Agreement you must have a completed [ERC](#) to receive grant money.

Applicants must have initiated current communication for required permits, determinations, and authorizations from all of the state agencies identified within the ERC. Applications that do not provide this information will be considered incomplete and will not be accepted. Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.

If you are applying for the sequential phase of your project, and it has been more than a year since you contacted the agencies for environmental review, please request that they each send you an email stating they still authorize you to do your project. Submit these emails with your application as verification of current authorization.

Projects occurring on federally administered lands or with federal funds must comply with the NEPA requirements imposed by that federal agency. These requirements can be more stringent; thus, a project on federally administered lands may or may not satisfy NEPA requirements under a categorical exclusion. Project applicants must submit a letter on federal agency letterhead from the federal agency verifying that all NEPA requirements have been met.

ADA Accessibility (access for people experiencing different abilities and access impediments)

NOTE: A Regulatory Negotiation Committee reported to the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) on September 15, 1999. The Committee developed Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) for picnic and camping facilities, beach access routes, and trails. For more information see: <http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards>.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination against people on the basis of disability. While specific technical standards have not yet been finalized for recreation facilities (including recreational trails), state and local government trail developers and operators nevertheless have statutory responsibilities to provide opportunities for the participation of people experiencing disabilities. Federal laws that affect the design, construction, alteration, and operation of trail facilities include the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the ADA. Current regulations implementing these statutes contain requirements that apply to existing trail construction and program operations and adopt technical standards to guide new trail construction and alterations of existing networks:

- Buildings and facilities newly-constructed or altered with Federal funds are subject to the accessibility requirements contained in the [Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards](#) (UFAS), the standard currently referenced in the ABA.
- Accessibility in federally-assisted programs is governed by the requirements of the USDOT regulations ([49 CFR part 27](#)) implementing [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act](#) (29 U.S.C. 794).
- At the time of latest revision of this document, the ADA is the newest legislation intended to improve access for people experiencing disabilities. The U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) title II implementing regulations ([28 CFR part 35](#)) describe the obligations of state and local governments for existing facilities and program operations, and require title II entities (public entities) to comply with either [UFAS](#) or the [Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines](#) (ADAAG) developed by the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (the [Access Board](#)) when newly constructing or altering facilities. Private sector entities, including lessees, concessionaires, and contractors to State and local governments, are governed by the DOJ title III implementing regulations, which adopt ADAAG as the standard for accessible design.
- RTP projects are primarily recreational in nature, rather than serving a more utilitarian transportation function. The applicant should consider the potential uses of each trail project, consider what is reasonable and feasible, and provide for users in an appropriate manner. It is not necessary to construct every recreational trail according to the ADA guidelines, but trail project sponsors must not install barriers or other features that would make it more difficult for people with disabilities to use the trail.

- Trail designers should seek opportunities to incorporate accessible features and elements, and to include trail routings that meet accessibility criteria to ensure that there are recreation opportunities for a variety of users within the RTP. Where trail-related facilities, such as parking, shelters, toilets, drinking fountains, and other features are provided on or along an accessible trail site, they should provide the required level of accessibility and be served by an accessible route. Trail designers should account for people experiencing disabilities that may arrive at trail facilities by horse, ATV, or snowmobile, with assistance, or by other means.

Application Review

Application Assistance

Technical assistance is available to all grant applicants through DPOR. DPOR staff will make every effort to answer questions regarding application procedures, proper completion of grant applications, and criteria used for project selection and grants awards. One key to receiving technical assistance is lead-time. Requesting technical assistance a few days before the project application deadline does not allow adequate time for review. For assistance, please contact the Grant Administrator or State Trails Program Coordinator. See Appendix A for DPOR contact information.

Grantee Performance Standards(NEW)

In order to be compliant with 2 CFR 200.205 *Federal Awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants* as well as allow for the reviewers to use performance standards in their evaluations, these criteria will be evaluated and shared with all grant application reviewers to assist with the decision whether or not to fund a grantee in the future. The costs to the program for applicants that do not follow directions or perform to acceptable standards are significant. The results include, but are not limited to, projects being de-obligated and future applications being denied. Please take these seriously.

- Did the grantee organization submit a reimbursement request within the first 10 months of project authorization to avoid the FHWA “inactivity” list?
- Did the grantee organization submit their final reimbursement request no later than 30 days after their federally approved project end date?
- Were the reimbursement requests and associated attachments correctly calculated, complete, legible, and on time?
- Were project milestones met per the approved schedule?
- Did the grantee organization adhere to their approved budget and scope of work?

Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board

The primary purpose of the ORTAB is to advise the Director of the DPOR on project funding for eligible outdoor recreation projects under the RTP. ORTAB nominates, reviews, and comments on trail and outdoor recreation projects during the competitive public process to ensure funding of high quality trails and recreational projects throughout the state.

ORTAB scores and ranks each qualified application in the project category or categories in which it belongs. The Director then has the opportunity to approve the recommended projects; those that advance are forwarded to the FHWA for approval. The ORTAB and DPOR have the discretion to further rank projects after scoring to ensure geographic diversity over time. The amount of available funding determines how many projects are funded. Please refer to Part A of this document for further detail.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications are scored by the following criteria:

- Detailed Project Description, Maps, and Public Access Documentation: 0-20
- Timeline of Proposed Activities and project end date: 0-15
- Proposed Budget: 0-15
- Project Funding, Sponsor Support, and Sponsor Match: 10 points

- Public Benefit: 0-15 (0-10 additional bonus points possible)

- Community Support: 0-25

Total: 110 possible

Please also see **Performance Standards** Section.

Multiple open grants

An applicant cannot apply for funding for a project that is currently under a grant agreement with DPOR. However, an applicant who is currently receiving grant funds may apply for a different project or apply for the same project scope once the existing grant has been closed. For example: Happy Trail, Phase II.

Application Sections

Section 1: Qualifying Criteria

Qualifying criteria have been developed to determine basic project eligibility for the RTP. Please provide supporting documentation within the application for all “yes” answers.

Section 2: Sponsor Introduction and Identification

This section requests the project title, applicant contact information, type of organization, and tax identification or EIN number.

Section 3: Public Access Documentation:

0 to 5 points possible

This section requests documented legal public access authorizations from all landowners in which the project area is located. Indicate within this section the landowner(s) for the entire length of the trail or project area. If the trail has legal access in the form of an easement it will have an Alaska Division of Lands number (ADL#). If this is the case, please list the ADL number(s).

To ensure the public has access to the trail(s), there must be landowner assurance that the public has access for a designated period of time. Either an easement or written agreement from the landowner allowing public use is required. The following are the requirements regarding land owners:

- If any part of the project crosses private property, an easement or written agreement from the landowner allowing public use for at least five (5) years must be included in the application.
- If any part of your project crosses public land, an easement or written agreement from the land manager allowing public use for at least ten (10) years must be included in the application.
- If the project is for winter trail grooming only, the application must include documentation from property owners that public access has been assured during winter months until the grant expiration date.

Land and / or Easement Acquisition:

If the application is to purchase property, your application must include legal descriptions of the property to be acquired, names of property owners whose property is to be acquired, and a letter from property owners indicating their willingness to sell. If the grant is approved for acquisition, additional coordination will be required.

Project Location and Map Documentation

Please identify the borough, region, or nearest community to your project. Please list the Meridian, Township (s), Range(s), and Section(s) of the property on which the project will take place.

Please attach a detailed map(s) that clearly show all adjacent property lines, land ownership, and the location of the proposed trails, facilities, and access points. Please include as **Attachment G** and submit all pertinent documentation.

Section 4: General Project Information

0 to 15 points possible

Amount of Funding Requested:

This section asks for the amount of grant funds requested to perform the proposed project. This includes the total project cost and the amount of grant funds being applied for. Note the funding limits for each category referenced below. ***Please round your request to the nearest dollar and note that your budget sheet must exactly match these numbers. FHWA will not accept any budget sheets that do not match the requests to the penny. Please also see Section 6: Proposed Budget below for more instruction.

Project Summary:

Provide two or three complete sentences that describe the proposed project's overview that could possibly be used in a media message. This section is **not** the place to talk about the project background, the benefits, the funding, or anything other than the actual work to be accomplished. Please save that information for the Detailed Project Narrative section.

Project Category:

Grants are available in the following four categories. Please mark the category in which your project best fits. If your project includes more than one category such as developing educational materials and building a motorized trail, please apply for separate grants.

Motorized (Primarily Motorized Use):

A project primarily intended to benefit one or more modes of motorized recreational trail use, such as snowmobile trail grooming, and/or ORV riding. A project may be classified in this category if the project also benefits some non-motorized uses; it is not necessary to exclude non-motorized uses, but the primary intent must be for the benefit of motorized use.

Non-Motorized (Exclusively Non-Motorized Use):


A project intended to benefit one or more modes of non-motorized recreational trail use, such as pedestrian and/or equestrian use. Motorized use isn't allowed for projects in this category. *Note: wheelchair use by mobility-impaired people, whether operated manually or powered, constitutes pedestrian use, not motorized trail use.*

Diversified (Accommodates multiple user groups):

A project intended to benefit multiple recreational trail users. This category could include projects where both motorized and non-motorized use will occur simultaneously. This category also includes projects where motorized and non-motorized uses are separated by season, such as equestrian use in summer and snowmobile use in winter. Some other examples are a common trailhead project serving separate ATV and bicycle trails, and purchasing a machine to groom both snowmobile, and cross-country ski trails.

Safety and Education

The state may use (not required) up to 5 percent of its apportionment each fiscal year for projects that develop and disseminate publications and operate educational programs that promote safety and environmental protection. These objectives relate to one or more of the uses of recreational trails by supporting non-law enforcement trail safety and trail use monitoring patrol programs, and providing trail-related training for free, or at a minimal cost to the public.

 **Definition of a Safety and Education project: i.e. free brochures, free classes, interpretive panels**

All projects using federal grant funds must have public benefit, be accessible, open and available to the

general public, or targeted to a broad segment of the general public. Federal grant funds should not be used for projects that have such limited capacity that only a few paying (or potentially paying) guests have access to the product of the project. The portions of a project using federal grant funds must be open for general public use or viewing at all times and when visitors are likely.

A Safety and Education project may be development and dissemination of publications and operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to the use of recreational trails, including supporting non-law enforcement trail safety and trail use monitoring patrol programs, and providing trail-related training These projects must offer training or materials either free to the general public, or at a very minimal cost. All reimbursable expenses must be allocated to educational materials.

Educational materials developed with grant funds become the property of the State of Alaska. Any materials developed with grant funds must also recognize the funding program. Electronic versions of agency logos will be supplied to successful applicants for placement on developed materials. Materials and curriculum developed with grant funds must be supplied to the division for public and future applicant use. Products developed will also be posted on the DPOR web site.

Types of Use

Check the boxes for all types of use or users the trail will accommodate.

Trail Information

Fill in the boxes regarding how many miles of trail the project will encompass.

Detailed Project Narrative:

Provide as much visual and narrative detail as necessary to help evaluators understand your project. Provide a detailed location map, site plan, drawings, and photos to clearly show the location and specifics of your proposed project, what the finished product will look like, and its relationship to other existing trails, roads, landmarks, access points, and the nearest community. Develop a workable project. Be sure the narrative answers these questions: Why is this trail project important? Is it feasible? **If your project application does not include this narrative it will not advance to the next level of review and will be disqualified. Use the following guidance to help you with your narrative.**

Educational Materials:

If educational materials are proposed, provide an example of the content and explain how it will be posted or distributed.

Maps:

Two maps are required of the project area: a vicinity map and a site-specific map. Land ownership must be indicated on the map for the entire project. Use U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic map at a scale of 1:63,360 and no larger than 11" x 17". Show the location of your project on the map, and provide the name of the map (e.g., Seldovia C-4). If the project includes many sites, such as a purchase of trail equipment to be used in a regional area or funding for a trails position, provide a map of the target trails the project will influence.

Equipment:

Attach photos, drawings, or specifications of equipment proposed for purchase. Any Equipment over \$1,000.00 will require 3 bids. Please include these with application. If there is only one distributor of a specialized piece of equipment, please make this clear in your application. *Note: equipment purchased with grant funds is the property of the State of Alaska and inventory tags will be issued to the applicant for placement on the acquired equipment.* Also see the "Buy America" section for requirements.

Trail Details:

Attach details of trails to be built or maintained including clearing width, grades, curve radii, surface material, and specifics of any excavation or fill proposed, and how you will dispose of cut vegetation or other wasted material. Include drawings showing trail modifications and describing impact on habitat, users, and neighboring property owners and adjacent land uses.

Bridges or Culverts:

If bridges or culverts are proposed, provide locations, dimensions, and design details. Also see the “Buy America” section for requirements.

Environmental restoration:

If proposing environmental restoration, give details of how damaged areas will be restored.

Trail Reroute:

If rerouting or altering the appearance or location of a trail, include drawings showing changes or modifications, and describe impacts this might have on habitat, users, or neighboring property owners. All projects described as having a “reroute” will be required to include an ERC.

Signage:

If signing is proposed, include sign dimensions, colors, content, method of installation, and spacing between signs or markers.

RTP grant recipients must comply with the following:

- FHWA *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*; from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. Part IX is for bicycle facilities, and is suitable for shared use paths.
- FHWA *Standard Highway Signs*; from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. Many signs have dimensions for bicycle facilities and trails.

Winter Trail Marking:

If marking winter trails, describe type of permanent marking system or explain in the project description why temporary markers will be used. Permanent winter trail markers are encouraged.

Land/Easement Acquisition:

If you are proposing to purchase land or easements, provide enough description to clearly identify the location of the intended acquisition. Include a plat or map of the property, who owns the properties to be acquired, and a timeline for acquisition.

Program Recognition:

All grant recipients are required to reference the State Trails Program that funded the project as their funding source on trail signs, equipment, etc. or in any printed materials. Decal or sticker logos may be provided by DPOR.

ADA Compliance:

Define the level of ADA access provided on this trail (easy, moderate, difficult, and very difficult). Define the trail surface, grade, cross slope, trail width, minimum clearance width, and obstacles. NOTE: All trailheads and trailhead facilities must be ADA accessible. For more information on ADA requirements see the ADA Accessibility section of these instructions.

Section 5: Timeline of Proposed Activities:

0 to 15 points possible

Provide a schedule of planned tasks and associated timelines that includes a brief description of the individual project to be completed. Include a list of the names of the project manager, associated milestone dates from start to completion, acquisition of needed materials and project assistance. When will the project be started and completed? Part of the new grantee performance standard evaluation is adherence to identified milestones and schedule.

***Plan Ahead! You must include a thoughtful project completion date. You will be expected to adhere to the date in your approved agreement. For more detail see 2 CFR 200.308 Revision of Budget and Program Plans, the *Period of Performance*, and *Grantee Performance Standards* sections in Part B, and the *Extensions* section under the *Grants and Administration* part of this document.

Section 6: Proposed Budget:

0 to 15 points available

Project cost information is by far the most troublesome part of the project application for many applicants. Please take extra care in preparing and checking the Proposed Budget section. Grantees may add additional budget sheets.

Suggestions for a successful Proposed Budget include:

- Please make sure the math is correct; check the math with a calculator. We are serious. We receive very few budgets with correct math.
- The total matching share plus the total grant share **MUST** equal the total project cost.
- Please calculate (80/20) match correctly. $\$50,000 / 80\% = 62,500$, $62,500 * 20\% = \$12,500$ (match)
- If you are Alaska State Parks your match ratio is 90.97/9.03: $50,000 / 90.97\% = 54,963.17$, $54,963.17 * 9.03\% = \$4,963.17$ (match). Do not calculate any less than this amount because 9.03% is the minimum match allowable. Please round up to the dollar. Your match for a 50k grant would be \$4,964.00.
- Please clearly identify match sources. (cash, confirmed-volunteers that are doing work that is included in the scope of work for your project, third-party donations (from whom?, how much?), in-kind resources (what?), etc.)
- Please ensure to include all quotes from contracted services.
- Include 3 competitive bids for equipment or single item purchases over \$1,000.00.
- Please make sure the application is complying with “Buy America” for anything made of steel or iron or that you have talked with the Trails Program Office about securing a waiver. Contact the State Trails Program office with questions.
- All items identified in the budget must be in the scope of work statement. Ex: Purchase of a snow groomer, where volunteer labor is used for match but not included in the scope of work, will not be accepted. Volunteers grooming a trail must be in the approved scope of work for a trail grooming project, to be eligible match. This is a common cause of disqualification. Please ask if there are specific questions.
- This cannot be stressed strongly enough: Please specifically identify all budget items. FHWA wants to know exactly what it is getting for the public money it is reimbursing. Try not to use words like “supplies” or “materials”, or “etc.” Instead use specifics, like “work gloves, hard hats, 100 feet of poly rope, 5#box of 2” galvanized nails”.
- Budget amounts should be rounded up to the nearest dollar in the calculation columns. Grantees should do the math correctly in the explanation box but enter a rounded total in column. Please do not include the pennies.
- When submitting documentation for reimbursement, the grantee must ensure that the expenditures are within the project scope and on the approved budget within 10% of the estimated cost. Paystubs and receipts, not invoices, will be required. Also see *Reimbursable Programs* section in Part B of this document.

See *Permissible Uses of Funds* within these instructions for additional information on allowable uses of grant funds.

Example 1: An example of a successful Alaska State Parks budget sheet

Budget Sheet (20% Match Requirement for RTP, 25% for Snow)

PLEASE BE VERY SPECIFIC IN YOUR EXPLANATION OF EXPENDITURES. See instructions for details.

Item	Grant Funds	Match	Total Cost	Explanations
LABOR				
ACC Trail Crew Lead	\$12,938.00		12,938.00	ACC Trail crew leader. 20 weeks @ \$646.88/week = \$12,937.50
ACC Trail Crew	\$28,879.00		28,879.00	3 ACC trail crew employees. 17 weeks @ \$1,698.75/week=\$28,878.75
Park Specialist		4,928.00	4,928.00	11 hours/week @ \$28.00/hr = \$4928.00 Supervisory field work
SUPPLIES & MATERIALS				
Chainsaw Bars	\$450.00		450.00	6 chainsaw bars @ \$75.00 ea.=\$450
Bar oil for chainsaws	\$210.00		210.00	3 cases @ \$70.00/case. Chainsaws owned by State Parks at no cost to RTP
Fuel for chainsaws and brushcutters	\$550.00		550.00	110 gal. of fuel @ \$5.00/gal = \$550.00 State Park chainsaws and brushcutters at no cost to RTP
EQUIPMENT				
Chainsaw Chain	\$450.00		450.00	100' bulk chain = \$450. Use with State Park chainsaws. No cost to RTP
Brush Cutter Blades	\$300.00		300.00	6 @ \$50.00/blade = \$300.00. For use with State Park Brushcutters at no cost to RTP
Chain tie straps (for building chainsaw chair)		35.00	35.00	32 sets of tie straps for building chains @ \$1.10/set = \$35.20. For use with Park owned chainsaws.
LAND/EASEMENT ACQUISITION				
Field Storage Boxes (Knaack)	\$1,200.00		1,200.00	Model 4830: 1@ \$650. Model 4824: 1@\$550. Total \$1200. For tool and food field storage.
OTHER	\$20.00		20.00	Bugz mesh chainsaw goggles. 1@\$20.00=\$20.00
Spike Camp Food for 4 crew members	\$4,080.00		4,080.00	\$272.00/week x 15 weeks = \$4080.00
Tents	\$920.00		920.00	4 tents @ \$230/ea. = \$920 For sleeping at remote spike camp
TOTAL COST=	49,997.00	4,963.00	54,960.00	

Example 2: An example of a successful Non-Profit budget sheet

Budget Sheet (20% Match Requirement for RTP, 25% for Snow)

PLEASE BE VERY SPECIFIC IN YOUR EXPLANATION OF EXPENDITURES. See instructions for details.

Item	Grant Funds	Match	Total Cost	Explanations
LABOR				
Final trail field layout	\$1,700.00		1,700.00	20 hours at \$85/hour (professional trailbuilder specializing in blke trails) See bid
Brushing and clearing	\$4,125.00		4,125.00	75 hours at \$55/hour (experienced adult trail crew)
bench and tread construction	\$22,100.00		22,100.00	260 hours at \$85/hour. Equipment operation, tread construction, hand finish, volunteer training.
SUPPLIES & MATERIALS				
Trail base rock -- 3" minus		12,500.00	12,500.00	Trail base rock to be provided at no cost by non-profit on-site quarry. 521 yards at \$24/cubic yard.
Trail surface material	\$6,913.00		6,913.00	Screened, clean dirt for surface. \$18.29/cubic yard for 378 yards including delivery. See bid
wooden bridge materials (2/5x8' brldges)	\$2,000.00		2,000.00	treated lumber decking=\$1500, lumber stringers= \$350 nails/ screws/ fasteners = \$150
EQUIPMENT				
Mini Excavator rental with operator	\$5,700.00		5,700.00	Mini excavator two months for trail benching and drainage at \$2850/month. See bid Happy Excavation.
Mini Dozer rental	\$1,962.00		1,962.00	Rental of Boxer mini dozer for one month for trail finishing. Happy Rentals
Tracked Rock and Dlr Dumper rental	\$3,000.00		3,000.00	Tracked rock/dirt dumper,2500 pound capacity for two months/ \$1500/month, See bid Happy Excavation.
LAND/EASEMENT AQUSITION				
OTHER				
Vibraplate Compactor	\$500.00		500.00	Vibraplate compactor for trail tread compaction finishing. \$500/month-one month. Happy Excavation
SWPPP	\$2,000.00		2,000.00	Cost of obtaining a SWPPP from ADEC
TOTAL COST=	50,000.00	12,500.00	62,500.00	

Page 11 of 19

Section 7: Project Funding and Sponsor Financial Support:

0-5 points possible

This is a reimbursement program; therefore, the grant recipient must pay 100% of the cost of any item before submitting a request for reimbursement for eligible costs. Trail grant funds cannot exceed the program requirements (80/20) of the total project cost. The remaining costs must come from the sponsor. Donations and in-kind services may be used as part of the sponsor's match, including skilled and unskilled labor. Land, construction materials, and other tangible resources may be considered acceptable donations. Some matching funds from other federal sources and agencies are allowed under certain conditions. Please contact the State Trails Program Coordinator if you are considering matching with other state or federal funds.

Section 8: Public Benefit

0 to 10 points possible (0-10 additional bonus points possible, as well)

The following information is requested in the application:

- Explain why your project is important and why it is needed.
- How will the public benefit?
- Estimate how many and what types of users you expect as a result of your project.
- How does this project provide new recreational opportunities?
- What problem does your project solve?
- Does your project provide an important missing recreational trail link?
- Will your project provide for people with disabilities? (5 possible bonus points)
- Will your project utilize youth development groups to provide labor or assistance? (5 possible bonus points)

Section 9: Community Support:

0 to 25 points available

The following information is requested in the application:

- Provide documentation that your project is included in, or is consistent with, local land plans and priorities.
- Include 3 letters of support from potential beneficiaries of your project.
- Has the local governing body given this project priority? Provide a resolution of support.
- What are the concerns from the opponents of this project and how have they been addressed? Some trail projects may be regarded as intrusive by local property owners or members of the public. It is the applicant's responsibility to work with local property owners or interest groups to mitigate objections.
- Describe the effort you made to determine the extent of any opposition. Include the list of individuals, organizations and communities you contacted. Provide Courtesy Notice, posting locations and the dates notices were posted. This information must be supported in the application.
- Resolutions from local governments and letters of support from land managers, community councils, and trail user groups are required and must accompany the application. Letters of support and documentation must be current and signed. Please do not include form letters.

Public Notice and Map

Before submitting an application, public notice must be given within the vicinity of the project location. This notice can be in the form of the public notice in the grant application. Notice should be posted in local areas that are likely to reach interested individuals. Possible posting areas include the local post office, trailheads, the project site, or a community meeting area, etc. Public notification must be posted at least three weeks before the application deadline. Other acceptable means of public notice may be public

meetings, radio announcements, management plans, etc. If using the format found in the grant application, a completed notice and posting locations must be included with the application. If this information is not submitted with the application, the application will be considered incomplete and not eligible for funding. Address any public responses in the grant application under the Community Support section.

Section 10: Sponsor (applicant organization) Commitment:

0-5 points possible

The following are suggestions to include in the application:

- Include a signed resolution from the sponsoring organization/public agency showing support for the project and commitment to grant management if awarded funds.
- What experience does your organization or agency have accomplishing similar projects?
- Who will be responsible for organizing and overseeing the work to ensure successful completion?
- You are required to document project expenditures and matching contributions, and to submit progress reports documenting work accomplished. What is your plan for documenting the work?
- What is the plan for long term maintenance or implementation of safety or educational project(s) after the life of the grant?

Past Grant Performance:

See Grantee Performance Standards in Part B. List Recreational Trails or Snowmobile Trails grants you have received for other projects. Include project title, grant identification number and grant award year. Include a signed resolution from the organization/public agency showing support for the project and commitment to grant management if the project is approved.

Section 11: Permits and Authorizations

Applicants are required to fill out the environmental review checklist and contact the following offices to determine if relevant permits or authorizations are required. Applicants are responsible for obtaining all required federal, state and local permits and approvals for any work that requires such. Indicate the permits and/or the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents required for ground disturbing projects, if applicable. Permits may not be applicable to safety, educational or non-ground disturbing projects. See the Environmental Review section in Part B of this document.

Section 12: Checklist for Completion

Please make sure you have included all attachments, each file labeled with the content title (not just letter) so it can be easily identified by the reviewers.

Section 13: Certified Signature

The application must be signed by an authorized official in order to be valid. Electronic signatures are acceptable, for electronic and paper copies. Unsigned applications will not be accepted.

Grant Management and Administration

Grant Agreement

Upon award, a grant agreement is prepared by DPOR with input from the applicant. The grant agreement contains a number of appendices for standard provisions, project description, reporting requirements, budget and financial accounting, and financial reports. You can find a pdf of a blank agreement for reference in Appendix C of this document. The grant agreement is signed by DPOR's certifying officer and the grantee. The grant period of performance is two years. However, please refer to the Grant Period of Performance section in Part B of these instructions for more, and very important, detail.

Extensions (NEW)

Grantees will only be given extensions for circumstances beyond their control, and only with prior approval from FHWA will a grant be extended past its original term.

If circumstances arise and extensions are requested, they must be fully justified in writing, illustrating unavoidable delays. When determining the timeline to complete the project an applicant should take delays into consideration caused by winter weather and the fire season, etc. Grantees requesting an extension must satisfy the criteria listed below. The criteria include but are not limited to:

- Requests for extensions must be received by the Grants Administrator before the expiration date of the grant. Requests for extensions after the expiration date of the grant will be denied.
- Grantees must have submitted timely quarterly progress reports. Grantees must maintain communication with the Grant Administrator during project implementation.

Multiple time extensions will only be considered if:

- Significant progress was made since the first extension was granted.
- The grantee encounters problems caused by external factors (legal problems, new regulatory requirements, inclement weather, etc.).
- Unforeseen circumstances arise during construction (physical, historical and/or archaeological site specific issues).

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation does not guarantee requests for extensions will be approved. Extensions will not exceed a total of four years beyond the grant start date as specified in the original Grant Agreement.

Terminating a Grant

Grant agreements will be terminated for reasons that include but are not limited to:

- Grantee requested or agreed to terminate the grant agreement.
- Grantee intentionally submitted fraudulent documents or engaged in other fraudulent activities involving the approved project.
- Grantee failed to acquire permits required to implement the approved scope of work.
- Grantee performance on the submission of quarterly progress reports throughout the life of the grant has been out of compliance with the grant agreement or performance standards.
- Grantee made little or no progress toward completing the approved scope of work prior to the completion date noted in the original grant agreement.
- Loss of funding from the Federal Highway Administration.
- Grantee has not complied with a requirement outlined in the grant agreement.

Appendix A: DNR, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation Contacts

For project development, application assistance, and programmatic questions contact:

State Trails Program Manager

(907) 269-8699

(2015) darcy.harris@alaska.gov

For general questions regarding an existing grant, or reimbursement status contact:

Grant Administrator

(907) 269-8709

(2015) steve.neel@alaska.gov

Mailing Address:

Alaska State Trails Program

550 W. 7th Avenue Suite 1380

Anchorage, AK 99501-3561

Fax: (907)269-8907

Appendix B: Agency Contacts for environmental review checklist (ERC)

Please note: as staff changes and turnover are frequent the numbers below are main- numbers for each office not for individuals.

Department of Natural Resources (DNR)- Division of Mining, Land and Water (DMLW):

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/>

Contact one of these offices to determine if the project will require a permit or authorization if the project is on state lands.

For projects in:

Southcentral: 550 W 7th Ave, Suite 900C
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 269-8552

Southeast: 400 Willoughby, Suite 400
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 465-3400

Northern: 3700 Airport Way
Fairbanks 99709
(907) 451-2740.

DNR - Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR): Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF):

Contact this office to determine if your project will affect a LWCF project site. Contact the LWCF State Liaison Officer at 550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1380, Anchorage, AK 99501; (907) 269-8694.

Office of History and Archeology (OHA):

Contact this office to help you determine if your project will affect historical or cultural properties. Applicants must allow at least thirty (30) days for project reviews; this can take longer if the applicant is asked to submit additional information. Applicants must first, determine project site location information by calling the phone number listed below. Applicants then must conduct the necessary research to determine if historic or cultural properties exist in the project area. If it is determined that historic and/or cultural properties will be affected, the applicant must specify a plan to mitigate any these concerns on the identified properties. The applicant may wish to include the cost of a site visit by OHA in their grant application. These costs are the responsibility of the applicant. To determine these costs contact the OHA. It is required that applicants submit a letter addressing the project's detailed scope of work, site location, and address any concerns regarding historic or cultural properties to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). In the letter to the SHPO, include the following language "*We are seeking your concurrence that no historic properties are adversely affected*".

Contact: 550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1310, Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 269-8721

Department of Environmental Conservation, (ADEC) Division of Water

Applicants who will be disturbing an acre or more total combined area (think about cumulative acreage

length and width of trail being built) will need to contact someone in the Division of Water to see if you qualify to complete a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. (SWPPP)

For more information go to <http://www.dec.alaska.gov/water/wnpspc/stormwater/index.htm>

Contact: (2014)

Storm Water and Wetlands Manager
Division of Water – Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
555 Cordova Street
Anchorage, AK 99501
Telephone: 907-334-2288
Fax Number: 907-334-2415

Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G);

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=home.main>

Applicants that propose to work within a designated State Game Refuge, Critical Habitat Area, Special Use Area or Sanctuary should contact the following offices. They may be able to provide information on other state land as well.

Division of Wildlife Conservation (within ADF&G):

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=divisions.wcoverview>

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=conservationareas.locator>

For projects within Sanctuaries.

Contact: Fish and Game Coordinator
333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518-1599
(907) 267-2281

Division of Sport Fish (within ADF&G):

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingsport.main>

For projects within Special Use Areas:

Contact: Regional Information Officer
Phone: (907) 267-2219
333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518-1599

Department of Labor and Workforce Development - Division of Labor Standards and Safety:

Grantees that propose to contract work must comply with all State and Federal requirements for wage rates. For questions and project determination grantees must contact the Division of Labor Standards and Safety.

Contact Wage and Hour Supervisor at:
3301 Eagle St. Suite 302
Anchorage, AK 99503
(907) 269-4900.

The following websites will link to the Department of Labor:

Wage and Hour Administration

<http://labor.state.ak.us/lss/home.htm>

Laborers' and Mechanics' Minimum Rates of Pay (Pamphlet 600)

<http://labor.state.ak.us/lss/pamp600.htm>

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA):

For questions contact the State Trails Program Coordinator.

The state has implemented a Programmatic Agreement with the FHWA - Western Federal Lands Highway Division, which categorically excludes work listed from additional NEPA analysis. For project work types that are not listed, contact the State Trails Program Coordinator, with the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation at 550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1380, Anchorage, AK 99501; (907) 269-8699. Please find the entire Programmatic

Agreement here:

http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/guidance/state_practices/agreement_ak.cfm

*Outside of the below activities may require additional NEPA analysis

- Purchase of trail maintenance equipment, materials and supplies
- Rehabilitation contained within the footprints of existing trails and trailhead facilities
- Re-grading within the footprints of existing trail and/or parking areas
- Striping and/or re-striping of existing trail facilities
- Development and distribution of educational materials
- Replacement, renovation, and/or rehabilitation of existing signs, kiosks, and markers
- New installations of signs, kiosks and markers at existing facilities
- Alterations to existing facilities in order to make them accessible to the elderly and handicapped persons

United States Army, Corp of Engineers (USACE):

For projects involving wetlands or bodies of water contact the following office:

<http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/About/Offices.aspx>

Contact:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Alaska District

P.O. Box 6898

JBER, Alaska 99506-0898

907-753-2522

Local Governing Body in your community:

Obtain project authorizations, approvals and support from a local governing body, such as a tribal entity, Borough, village council, or city assembly.

Appendix C: Frequently Asked Questions

Updated April 2015

- **What is a public project?** All projects using federal grant funds must have public benefit, be accessible, open and available to the general public, or targeted to a broad segment of the general public. Federal grant funds should not be used for projects that have such limited capacity that only a few paying (or potentially paying) guests have access to the product of the project. The portions of a project using federal grant funds must be open for general public use or viewing at all times and when visitors are likely.
- **Do I have to fill out an Environmental Review Checklist?** Yes. Every applicant must fill out an ERC unless they have a “**categorical exclusion**” (see question below). This shows the reviewer that the applicant has gone through the process of thinking about the environmental impacts of their proposed project and has contacted all of the necessary agencies and acquired all necessary permits. Some answers on the ERC may be “not applicable” or “no” – this is OK.
- **What is a “categorical exclusion” and how do I know if my project qualifies?** Under “Grant Forms” <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm> on the Trails Program web page, refer to both the [CFR 771.117](#) and the [Programmatic Agreement](#). If your project qualifies under Stipulation 1 **ONLY**, you have a “**categorical exclusion**” and will not need an ERC. If your project qualifies under Stipulations 2 or 3 of the Programmatic Agreement you must have a completed [ERC](#) to receive grant money.
- **Do I need new letters of support if I got them last year?** Yes. The circumstances or the stakeholders surrounding your project may have changed and those that supported last year may not support this year. You may have your supporters simply email an updated voice of support that can be attached to last year’s letter.
- **Can I just turn in last year’s application if I change the dates?** No. Please use the new and updated application form from the website available on or after August 15 of the year in which you are applying for funds. We will try to update and improve the application annually.
- **Must I have all my permits and authorizations final and included with my application?**
 1. All land use authorizations or letters of non-objection for land use must be included with the application. If your project doesn’t have permission from the land owner, it cannot move forward.
 2. All agency documents such as an Office of History and Archaeology inspection, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), or Fish Habitat Permit do not necessarily have to be finalized. These permits can cost money or take months to obtain and, 1. If your project doesn’t get approved for funding you will not need, and 2. You must only have them in hand before you break ground for the project.
- **If I include more match than required, does it reflect favorably on my application?** No, you will not receive a higher score for having more match than is required. Having more match could cause the federal share to decrease if the Federal Highways Administration determines there is less need based on more than the 20% match requirement.(the amount of donations or volunteers you secure on your own is your business as long as you document in your budget the minimum amount required in the application.)
- **Can my project be mainly for surveying, planning, research and assessments?** No. Recreational Trails Grants are intended to help initiate shovel-ready projects with tangible, on-the-ground results; i.e. a bridge across a creek on a ski trail, a new hiking trail, a bike pump park, motor-cross track improvements, etc.

- **Can my project be for routine maintenance?** No. This grant is intended for project initiation, trail or trail facility development, repair or improvement.
- **Will any costs that I incur before the grant agreement is signed be allowable reimbursements?** No.
- **Can I just guess at how much it will cost to contract out a service?** No. Please contact contractors and collect their professional estimates or bids. Include those with your package.
- **Can I leave the explanation part of the budget sheet blank if I don't know the information?** Please avoid this. It will be returned to you and you will need to clearly justify all labor, materials and services with explanations of hourly /unit/other costs. (Example: If you enter \$22,000 labor as a line item with no or little explanation you are guaranteed to have your application returned.) Please see the Application Instructions for further detail.
- **Once the grant agreement is signed, how long does it take for me to get my money?** The Recreational Trails Program is a reimbursable grant. You are expected to buy or pay upfront for services and materials and then submit your receipts with a reimbursement form for payment. There are no advances.
- **How do you figure the match percentage?** The Recreational Trails Program grants require a 20% match from the grantee. However, that percentage is based on the total project cost, not just the federal share. Therefore, the formula for determining match would be (federal share divided by 80%) x 20% = match requirement. An example is a grant that has a \$50,000 federal share would be: \$50,000 divided by 80% times 20% = \$12,500. \$12,500 would be the match requirement.
- **How long do I have to complete my project?** Grant agreements may be good for up to two years, however you must turn in a reimbursement request for within the first 10 months after FHWA approval or risk federal de-obligation of your project. Please plan accordingly and see Instruction and Information Manual for more information.
- **How much money is available for one project?** Currently \$50,000 is the maximum award for non-motorized projects and \$100,000 for motorized projects. A motorized project is one where the trail is predominately for motorized recreation. This is not for motorized equipment to be used on a non-motorized trail.
- **Can I have more than one grant open at the same time?** You may have more than one grant open for different projects, and you may have one grant project contain more than one phase, but each phase will have to be completed before the next one can begin.
- **Is it useful if I put "RTP grant" in the email subject line when communicating about my project?** Not really. Please include the entire name of your project in the subject line of every email about your project. We have up to RTP 100 grants open at any one time and this helps us to keep track of each specific grant. If you label your email "RTP grant" it is not specific enough.
- **How are awarded projects selected?** Applications submitted on time are initially reviewed by the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, then forwarded to an advisory board (ORTAB) for scoring and recommendation. Once the scores and recommendations are received, the State Parks Director's office selects the grants to be awarded.
- **Do I have to own the land where the project will take place?** The public must be assured legal access to trails and trail related facilities developed or maintained with grant funds. If any portion of a trail project is on private land, the applicant must obtain documented permission from the landowner for public access for

a minimum of 5 years. Projects on public land must have documented approval from the land manager and access assured for at least 10 years. The grant applicant must obtain these assurances prior to submitting an application. If the project is for winter access or trail grooming only, public access need only be assured for the life of the grant. Applications missing landowner permission to access will be considered incomplete and ineligible.

- **What is the current value of volunteer labor?** For 2014 it was \$26.50 / hr. This will change in the summer of 2015 and we will update this publication. Until the new amount is released, use this figure.
- **Are there applicant performance standards?** Yes. Please see Instruction and Information Manual for more detail.
- **Will my project have to comply with the Buy America provision?** Yes, if the project uses an item containing steel valued at \$2500 or more. Think: bridges, culverts, machinery, etc. Please see Instruction and Information Manual for more detail.
- **I think my project idea might qualify under the Safety, Signing, and Education apportionment. How do I know?** Development and dissemination of publications and operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to the use of recreational trails, including supporting non-law enforcement trail safety and trail use monitoring patrol programs, and providing trail-related training (limited to 5 percent of a State's apportionment). These projects must offer training or materials either free to the general public, or at a very minimal cost. All reimbursable expenses must be allocated to educational materials. Also see definition of “public project”.

Appendix C: Applicant Responsibility Statement

Section 13. Certifying Signature See Part B, Section 13, of the instructions for guidance.

As a Recreational Trails Program applicant I understand that the following resources are available to me to assist with the application process up to and until, the application deadline of November 15.

1. Application and Environmental Review step by step Instruction and Information Manuals. These can be found on the State Trails Program web page <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aktrails/index.htm> or can be emailed to me by contacting the State Trails Program.
2. State Trails Program Staff: email/phone darcy.harris@alaska.gov, steve.neel@alaska.gov, 907-269-8700.
3. Instructional Teleconferences: typically early September. Call for the exact dates!
4. RTP Guidance resources provided on the State Trails Program web page.
5. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) "Super Circular" 2 CFR 200 provided on the State Trails Program web page.

The signature below indicates approval of this project and authorizes this request for funding from the applying organization. I understand that it is my responsibility as an applicant or future grantee to engage the Recreational Trails Program with integrity and to ensure that program funds are spent only on appropriate and allowable costs. If I have questions about what constitutes appropriate and lawful spending practices I will contact the State Trails Program Office to clarify. I understand I could be held responsible for misused federal grant funds and be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. If I do not understand the parameters of federal grant fraud I will contact the State Trails Program Office.

Signature of authorized official

Printed or typed name of authorized official

Title

Agency/Organization

Please note that project applications must be submitted and postmarked no later than **November 15** of each year for the **Recreational Trail Program** grants and **July 1** of each year for **Snowmobile Trail Grants**.

END OF APPLICATION

Please keep a copy of your application for your records, and submit a copy with attachments via standard mail to:

Darcy B. Harris
Alaska State Trails Program
550 W. 7th Ave, Suite 1380
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

* Please be sure that all attachments are submitted with each project proposal sent by mail.

Print Form

3/12/15
Current Date

Page 18 of 18

Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project

Darcy B. Harris
April 20, 2015
MSPM 686 B

Darcy B. Harris

Alaska State Trails Program Coordinator at the
Department of Natural Resources and
Recreational Trails Program manager for Alaska

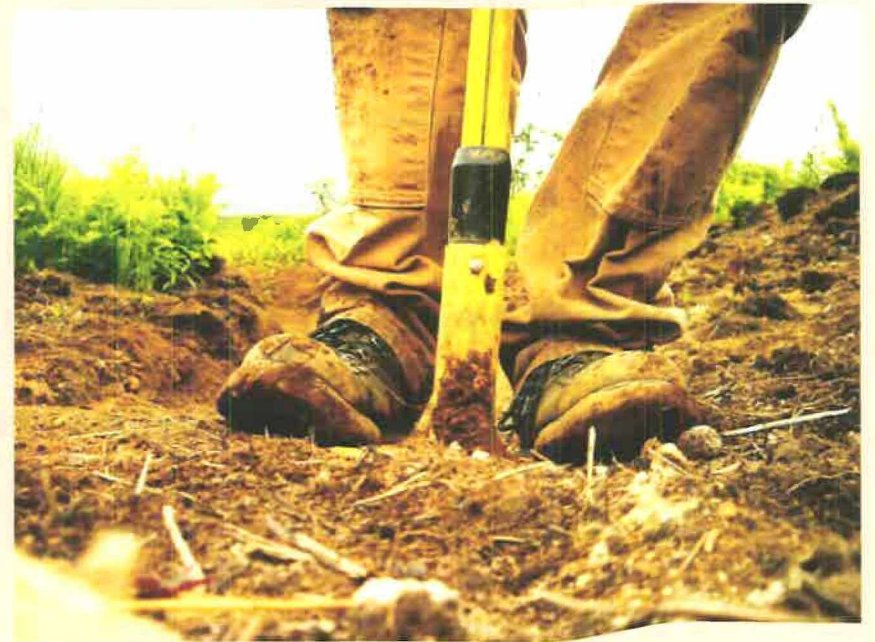


In this presentation:

- 1. Recreational Trails Program (RTP) background**
- 2. Stakeholder Identification and Importance**
- 3. Opportunities/ Risks**
- 4. Project Hypothesis/ Project Objectives**
- 5. Project Management Plan**
- 6. Research Approach and Methodology, Results**
- 7. Discussion of two deliverables created**
- 8. Risk Analysis**
- 9. Conclusions**
- 10. Continuous Improvement**
- 11. Lessons Learned**

Recreational Trails Program Background

- **Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) 1993**
- **Department of Natural Resources**, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation.
- **440 trail projects with ~\$13.5 million dollars in Alaska, and over 20,500 trail-related projects nation-wide**



Project Stakeholders

- Commissioner of the DNR
- Sponsor/ Director of Alaska State Parks
- Deputy Director of Alaska State Parks
- Administrative Operations Manager of Alaska State Parks
- State Procurement Officer for the DNR
- FHWA RTP Manager
- RTP applicants/grantees
- State Trails Program team
- Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board
- State Parks Trail Crews
- Trail building contractors and crews
- Community trail users



An *opportunity*
to mitigate risks
by clearly
communicating
requirements and
expectations.



Project Hypothesis

When applicants have an improved means by which to meet the requirements of the grant program they will become more self-sufficient, knowledgeable, successful, and compliant.

Building a Bridge

✓ **Risks and Opportunities identified**

✓ **Hypothesis**

Why is this idea important?



✓ **Risks and Opportunities identified**

✓ **Hypothesis**

✓ **Importance**

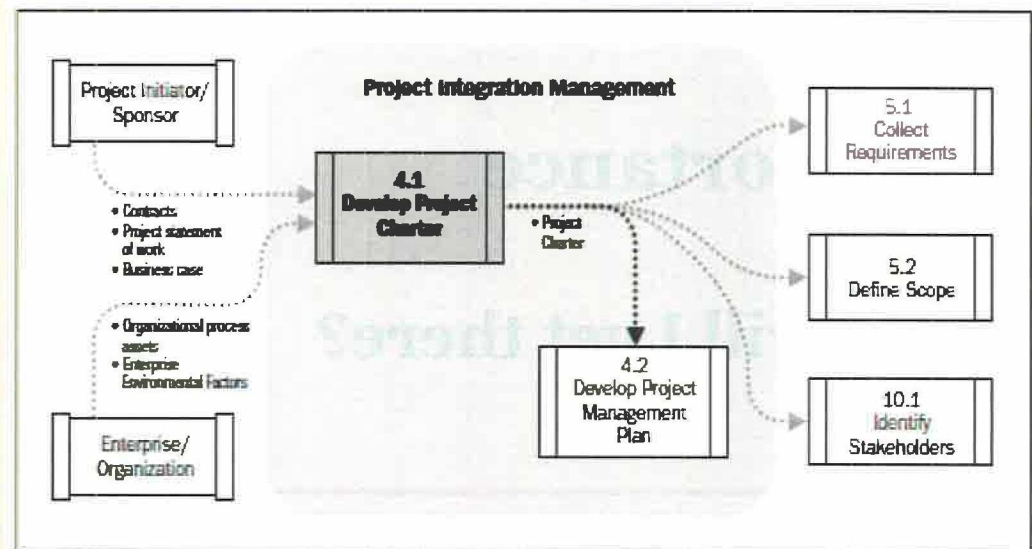
How will I get there?



Project Charter

Identified:

- ✓ Business Case
 - ✓ Objectives
 - ✓ Risks
 - ✓ High Level Requirements
 - ✓ Sponsor Support
 - ✓ Success Criteria
 - ✓ Acceptance Criteria
 - ✓ Summary Milestones
 - ✓ Estimated Schedule
 - ✓ Estimated Budget
-
- ✓ Signed by Project Sponsor



Project Management Plan

- Scope
- Schedule/Time
- Cost
- Quality
- Communications
- Risk
- Change
- Progress and Performance Measurement
- Training Criteria
- Closeout and Acceptance



Project Management Plan

✓ Risks and Opportunities identified

✓ Hypothesis

✓ Importance

✓ Project Management Plan initiated

Identify methods to reach objectives

Research Approach and Methodology

1. Literature Review

2. State and Federal law research

3. Best Practices Investigation

4. Two Qualitative Surveys:

- Applicant-Needs Analysis**
- Survey of Key Internal Stakeholders**

Utilize data to create tools and mitigate risk.

Survey Method

 **SurveyMonkey®** was utilized to conduct two surveys:

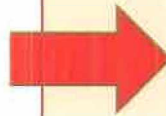
- 1) Applicant-Need Analysis: 30 people contacted
20 responded**
- 2) Internal team survey: 8 people contacted, 8
responded**

Survey Results

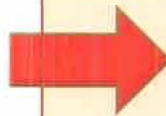
- **60% applicants surveyed wanted more written instruction and reference materials**
- **Others asked for tutorials, budget examples, environmental review instructions**
- **100% Internal team thought instructions and trainings would help applicants increase success and compliance**

Project Deliverables

Deliverable 1: An application instruction and information manual

 **Outcomes:** Increased: success, compliance
Decreased: time cost, frustration

Deliverable 2: Responsibility language added to application

 **Outcome :** Increased: legal protection if necessary.

Identified Root Causes of Primary Risks

- Insufficient training opportunities and written instructions
- Many years without strict requirements for reporting or spending= grantees became accustomed to lenient expectations
- Variations in regulatory and guidance interpretation nationwide; no nationwide Standard Operating Procedures
- Regulations in need of updating (2 CFR 200)

Federal Risk Analysis Review

- Risks associated with doing nothing
- Collaboration on S.W.O.T. analysis
- FHWA used risks identified from this project in final Risk Analysis
- 2 CFR 200.205 ***Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants***
- 2 CFR 200.303 ***Internal Controls***
- Encourage compliance and mitigate fraud opportunity

Conclusions

✓ Applicant Accountability

Internal control shifts risks appropriately to those spending money

High risk conditions mitigated / Legally defensible

Increased awareness, understanding, compliance

✓ Process Efficiency

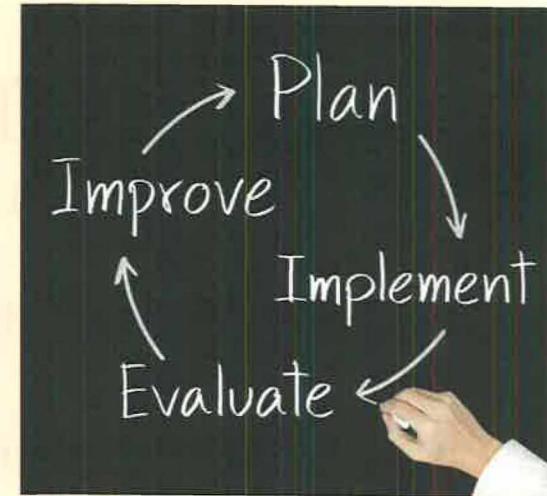
Expectations clearly communicated

Increased effectiveness, success, self-sufficiency

Time= money

Continuous Improvement

- Continue research and implementation of best practices.
- Keep dialogue open with stakeholders.
- Maintain pattern of improving processes and documents.
- Create opportunities for training.



Lessons Learned

- Communicate with stakeholders early and often.
- Regularly refer back to the scope statement and the Charter to be certain of parameters.
- Always find ways to improve processes, documents.
- Project Management methodology is universally applicable and useful.

What We've Discussed:

- 1. Recreational Trails Program background**
- 2. Stakeholder Identification and Importance**
- 3. Opportunities/ Risks**
- 4. Project Hypothesis /Project Objectives**
- 5. Project Management Plan**
- 6. Research Approach and Methodology, Results**
- 7. Project Deliverables**
- 8. Risk Analysis**
- 9. Conclusions**
- 10. Continuous Improvement**
- 11. Lessons Learned**

Questions?



Section 13. Certifying Signature See Part B, Section 13, of the instructions for guidance.

As a Recreational Trails Program applicant I understand that the following resources are available to me to assist with the application process up to and until, the application deadline of November 15.

1. Application and Environmental Review step by step Instruction and Information Manuals. These can be found on the State Trails Program web page <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aktrails/index.htm> or can be emailed to me by contacting the State Trails Program.
2. State Trails Program Staff: email/phone darcy.harris@alaska.gov, steve.neel@alaska.gov , 907-269-8700.
3. Instructional Teleconferences: typically early September. Call for the exact dates!
4. RTP Guidance resources provided on the State Trails Program web page.
5. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) "Super Circular" 2 CFR 200 provided on the State Trails Program web page.

The signature below indicates approval of this project and authorizes this request for funding from the applying organization. I understand that it is my responsibility as an applicant or future grantee to engage the Recreational Trails Program with integrity and to ensure that program funds are spent only on appropriate and allowable costs. If I have questions about what constitutes appropriate and lawful spending practices I will contact the State Trails Program Office to clarify. I understand I could be held responsible for misused federal grant funds and be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. If I do not understand the parameters of federal grant fraud I will contact the State Trails Program Office.

Signature of authorized official

Printed or typed name of authorized official

Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation
Recreational Trails Grant Program



Application Instructions and Information
Revised April 2015



Thank you!



Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project

PROJECT LESSONS LEARNED

Planning Phase:

The largest lesson learned during the planning phase of this project, is the realization that when a problem or vulnerability is identified it can actually be addressed and the process improved. Processes and procedures, even within government settings, are able to be changed and improved. Government employees sometimes feel as if they need to simply play the existing game, follow the established procedure, and move forward to the predictable end. Occasionally those ends are less than perfect or even incorrect, but one can feel helpless as one small cog in the larger machine. This is one reason issues ranging from legal inconsistencies to typos can be perpetuated. During the identification of the project hypothesis and business need it became clear that vital elements could be improved and changed. Some things were in fact, within the control of the project manager. This realization was empowering in both a larger sense of ability to change an existing system and the more local sense of making the project manager's job easier. One drawback to this project is that it does create another layer of bureaucracy, and some would find that to be a step backward for government process. When weighing this, the project manager has determined the benefit outweighs the costs.

A secondary lesson to the previous, and over-arching lesson, is one of realizing the importance of including stakeholders and their feedback in the improvement process and resisting the temptation to make unilateral decisions. Throughout the planning phase the project manager has been working with various stakeholders and realizing how important their input and observations are to the success of the improvement project. It has been determined that their participation will be invaluable as they are users and customers of the process. The project manager and internal team are immersed in the minute details and regular frustrations of the RTP, and it is easy to make assumptions about what will "fix" the problems, where those problems lie, and their origins. After preliminary and informal discussions with various stakeholders it is clear that the project management team does not have all the answers and it would be imprudent to turn assumptions into unilateral decisions or programmatic changes. This observation will assist the project manager to be open-minded and thorough when employing the research methods for the execution of the project.

The project manager, at first skeptical about the availability and applicability of literature review for this project, was impressed and surprised by the amount of literature and case study available to inform her project. With only a cursory exploration, she found several studies and documents that will be useful in the planning, research and execution phases of the project. It is

recommended for future projects to peruse literature and case studies pertinent to the project's scope of work.

Execution Phase:

A lesson that was reinforced through this process is how transferable project management tools and techniques are for many kinds of projects. One of the intended outcomes of this project was to create a repeatable process to create successful grant applications. It is possible to predict that there will be an improved outcome because of this Manual; however, the largest variable in the equation is the ever-changing pool of stakeholders and their changing aptitudes and needs. This is why the tool was developed to be iterative and change with regular stakeholder feedback.

Start IRB research and submittal process as early as possible and anticipate delays. Time allotted in project schedule to prepare IRB submittal, advisor review, and final documents submittal took a longer time than the project manager had anticipated.

Student time management is crucial. If you are creating a large product for your project, start as soon as you can. Time goes fast and there are many expectations for each PPM.

Stay on top of change management and follow the approved process.

Communicate regularly and clearly with key stakeholders especially those high on the power interest grid.

Be very clear about your requirements and do not make assumptions about understanding.

It may be helpful to always copy yourself on all communications. As busy project managers we can go back to reference where we were in any given conversation with any stakeholder. This is especially helpful when there are many stakeholders and many different conversations happening simultaneously.

There are so many opportunities for scope creep when taking on a program improvement project. Much of the literature and best practice research that was done inspired new ideas and additional ways the program could be directed. Although it is very important to stay within an approved scope of work, there is no limit to the value of inspiration. Every time I had an idea I identified as scope creep I wrote it down as something I could do or incorporate, or improve later, within another project scope.

Update the schedule regularly, and resist putting it off as that makes it much more difficult to estimate accurately the time spent for any given task.

It was more difficult than originally anticipated to track the student work time and the project manager's work time, being one in the same person. The project manager found that the line between the work needed to accomplish the project and the school work was blurry and she didn't want to count her time twice.

It has been useful to continuously revisit the parameters of the project scope, deliverables, requirements, and expectations. The project manager found it fairly easy to veer off track when reading and incorporating literature into the final paper.

Don't underestimate the value of getting assignments done early. Then there is time for review and editing, and enjoying other parts of your life.

Don't underestimate the time it takes people to get back to you. You care the most about your question or project and it is probably not anyone else's priority. If you need immediate feedback say so. Communicate clearly about your requirement. Add specific deadlines and expectations along with your question. Don't expect people to read your mind.

Be prepared for slow responses, or lack of responses, to survey instruments. Have a back-up plan for small data sets.

Be open to the project's lessons. I started out thinking my project was predominantly about communication and stakeholder management and it ended up being about managing risk through communication and stakeholder management.

Keep what you expect from your stakeholders in perspective. Have patience.

Regularly communicate with those stakeholders that want that kind of communication. Don't bother those that don't.

If it is an option, choose a team and a sponsor that you work and communicate well with.

Practice, review, and then practice some more.

Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project

PROJECT EXECUTION: KNOWLEDGE AREAS ANALYZED

The Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) presents a standard terminology and guidelines for project management. The PMBOK is a process-based guide that recognizes five basic process groups and ten knowledge areas. The progression of learning about and employing three of these knowledge areas is discussed below.

Procurement management:

Project Procurement Management describes the processes involved with purchasing or acquiring products, services or results for the projects.

Although there was really nothing to buy for my project it was my intention to become knowledgeable about the State of Alaska procurement laws and federal procurement guidelines as they pertain to the Recreational Trails Program because compliance with these is essential for successful program management. I researched these laws and interviewed subject matter experts and included guidance in the final Manual that has been approved by the State Procurement Officer and the Federal Highways Administration Recreational Trails Program administrator.

In addition, it was critical for me to become more knowledgeable about procurement fraud and how it pertains to public funding sources such as federal grant programs. This component has really been a study of procurement risk. I have demonstrated learning about this topic by incorporating analysis about how to identify and prevent fraud and mitigate procurement risk as part of my final analysis where I discuss incorporation of administrative controls into the program I manage to prevent fraud. Several new administrative tools have been developed and incorporated as a result of this analysis including new legal language added to the RTP grant application that will add a layer of protection for the Division. Adding language to the application and requiring applicants to confirm their knowledge and responsibility may not actually make them more accountable, but may serve to make them aware of the gravity of the expectations and make those expectations more legally defensible in the rare case of noncompliance.

I am continuing to work with the FHWA RTP manager on a Risk and Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of the RTP and identifying areas where fraud could occur and what internal controls are necessary to prevent that from occurring. This has been an effective exercise because it has opened communication between our two government agencies.

Weaknesses identified by our agency cooperation include: 1) Current grant application and project reimbursement forms and instructions are not detailed enough and allow too much room for interpretation, requiring additional scrutiny by DNR and FHWA to ensure complete and accurate project documentation. 2) Legacy RTP recipient's resistance to change. Changes to how the RTP is defined and administered will likely be met with resistance from applicants with a history of RTP funded projects.

The Risk Response Strategy we came up with is: If DNR increases and improves training opportunities for RTP applicants then applicants will have a more in-depth understanding of program requirements.

Stakeholder management: Stakeholder Management includes the processes required to identify the people, groups, or organizations that could impact or be impacted by a project, to analyze stakeholder expectations and their impact on the project and to develop appropriate management strategies for effectively engaging stakeholders in project decisions and execution. These processes will be closely linked to the Communications Processes discussed below.

I have been learning how to effectively work with the various RTP stakeholders. An important outcome from this project will be to improve the quality of application submittals with decreased applicant frustration. For this project I hypothesized that when applicants have an improved means by which to meet the requirements of the grant program they will become more self-sufficient, knowledgeable, successful, and compliant. Utilizing engagement tools such as the investigative surveys I have actively involved stakeholders, identifying their requirements for an effective instruction and information manual, improvements to the process and documents, and ideas for accommodating training requirements.

I began my stakeholder needs-analysis with a survey involving a select group of applicants evaluating and making suggestions on the current application process and documents. In addition I surveyed key internal stakeholders to help determine the most challenging aspects of the grant process from their perspective. As I collected feedback some of my assumptions were realized and some were not. Some of this frustration I will be able to alleviate through improved instruction and training, and some I will not because I am bound to the regulations.

Their feedback was collected and organized, documenting commonalities as well as anomalies. This feedback informed the writing of the Manual and will also assist with building training opportunities in the future.

The Manual is designed to be a generalizable and iterative tool for the program. I will receive the most feedback during and after the next grant cycle starting in August, however, the process of creating the Manual has helped me understand the needs of the applicants and think about the utility of such tools. I intend to use this process in the future to create an environmental review instruction manual that is equally responsive to applicant feedback and needs. I had former applicants review my draft Manual and, although they commented on how dense- yet thorough it

was, they said it will be a helpful tool. I have also received feedback from internal team members and the project's sponsor that they think the Manual is thorough and will be an excellent resource for anyone wanting to know more about the program.

Communications management: Communications Management includes the processes required to ensure timely and appropriate generation, collection, distribution, storage, retrieval, and ultimate disposition of project information. The stakeholders I refer to in the Communications Management Plan chapter of my PMP are all internal team members or support-people involved with the management of the RTP. For this Knowledge Area learning element of my project work spring semester I wanted to learn more about Communications Management while keeping my scope within a practicable range and improve communication with a particular and very important small group of managers who have qualities of both internal and external stakeholders. This was a more a measurable accomplishment than if attempted improvement was with all applicants. I focused on improving communications with these six people for several reasons including: they all are unfamiliar with the current RTP application process, guidelines, and regulations, and are visibly challenged by those things; they are strongly encouraged to apply for this money, by their management, because they need it to supplement their budgets and accomplish work in the field; and they are very busy managers who depend on subordinates to apply for and manage RTP grants yet they are responsible for that management and the outcomes. They look to me for program guidance and I wanted them to have success.

For this short term schedule, I identified success with this knowledge area as me being able to clearly explain my expectations and requirements and those of the program, and for those six managers to be willing to work with me to fulfill those expectations.

There are many steps to cover before the beginning of the new grant cycle and it will still take a lot of work and good communication. I will be talking with each group in person and also on the phone. I will have to make sure they feel they have enough access to resources so as to mitigate frustration prior to its occurrence, and I will have to set up refresher meetings for closer to the application deadline.

I reached out to all six of these stakeholders for their input and feedback. My goals were to talk with each superintendent and their administrative support person via teleconference and identify their requirements. My biggest lesson learned about these goals was that I needed to allow for more time to accomplish them. It is very difficult to find a time that works for busy people- especially when they see the grant cycle start date four months away, and they are getting ready for the upcoming field season. There are many things that are prioritized ahead of next year's RTP cycle.

I have refined my goal to meet with each office- in person or via teleconference sometime prior to the start of the grant cycle in August. I have determined that in-person meetings, in addition to the teleconferences will be necessary in some cases especially when it comes to getting all of the

players in the same room at the same time. I am setting up those meetings now and managing the associated limitations of availability and cost. I will use the new Manual as an outline for my meetings and they will be able to use it as a tool for reference and inquiry.

Once I meet with all of them and identify their requirements I will know how I can tailor my assistance to each office. I will also encourage them to continue the conversation and keep lines of communication open with the Trails Program Office.

I have been working over the phone with three of the six on the requirements for their federal aid packages. This has been very productive because I have been explaining and showing them what I need and am expecting them to produce the corrected results accordingly. In the past I have neither explained my expectations nor had them make the changes I just took care of it all. I anticipate this approach will reinforce the learning opportunity and increase efficiency as it will lessen my work load in the future.

Fortunately there is little employee turn-over in Alaska State Parks but nonetheless I think this will be an ongoing learning and teaching process for all of us. I know I will be doing the teaching at first but I will also be learning from them as they communicate their needs and expectations.

The biggest thing I have learned through this process is that what I thought was predominantly a project centered on communications and stakeholder management was really a project about risk and how to manage it with communications and stakeholder management. There is a real synthesis between effective communication and risk mitigation and this is something I will continue to think about and employ.

Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project
PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLAN

DARCY B. HARRIS
MSPM CAPSTONE

FINAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	5
Project Management Approach.....	6
Project Team	7
Project Research Methods and Approach to Analysis	7
Project Scope	7
Milestone List	8
Schedule Baseline and Work Breakdown Structure	9
Method for Measuring Project Progress and Performance	10
Constraints	10
Assumptions.....	10
Management Plans	11
Project Scope Management Plan.....	11
Schedule/Time Management Plan.....	11
Cost Management Plan.....	12
Quality Management Plan.....	12
Human Resources Management Plan.....	13
Staffing Management Plan	13
Resource Calendar	13
Communications Management Plan.....	13
Communications Conduct:	15
Risk Management Plan.....	16
Risk Register.....	16
Procurement Management Plan.....	16
Change Management Plan.....	16
Process Flow.....	17
Change Log.....	18
Training Criteria and Management Plan	18
Application Instruction and Information Manual Outline	18
Applicant Accountability Affidavit	19

Closeout and Acceptance Management Process	19
Lessons Learned	20
Sponsor Acceptance	20
Appendix A: Work Breakdown Structure and Associated Dictionary	21
Appendix B: Tracking Gantt, Final Schedule, WBS	24
Appendix C: Risk Register	26
Appendix D: Change Request Form	28
Appendix E: Change Log.....	29
Appendix F: Project Closeout	31
Appendix G: Lessons Learned Log	32
Appendix H: Stakeholder Register	34
Appendix I: Requirements Traceability Matrix	37
Appendix J: Initial Project Abstract.....	39
Appendix K: Project Charter.....	40
Appendix L: Sponsor Letter.....	43
Appendix M: Research Sources, Methods, and Instruments	44
Appendix N: Planning Phase Status Reports	46
Appendix O: IRB Approval Documentation	49
Appendix P: Project Scope Statement Document.....	50
INTRODUCTION.....	2
PROJECT PURPOSE AND JUSTIFICATION	2
SCOPE DESCRIPTION	2
HIGH LEVEL REQUIREMENTS.....	3
BOUNDARIES	3
STRATEGY	4
DELIVERABLES.....	4
ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA	4

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CONSTRAINTS	5
ASSUMPTIONS	5
COST ESTIMATE	5
COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS	6

Introduction

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project (Project) will create two deliverables or products. First will be an application instruction and information manual for RTP applicants in Alaska, about how to apply for funding and comply with federal and state fiscal regulations and programmatic guidelines. The information will be available on the State Trails Program website for applicants to study and utilize. Secondly, an accountability affidavit will be developed that acknowledges an applicant's understanding of state and federal procurement rules and guidance as it pertains to the RTP. This signed document will be required with their initial application package.

The first semester the project manager will develop a Project Management Plan (PMP) for this project, initiate communication with the Information Resources Management (IRM) Division regarding logistics to post this material on the State Trails Program website, and identify and plan qualitative research methodology for an applicant needs-analysis and internal investigation. In the time between the semesters the project manager plans to initiate a short-term applicant needs-analysis utilizing the current application instruction manual and a select group of applicants. She will also initiate an investigation with a small group of internal stakeholders who are directly involved with the administration of the RTP, to determine the most *vulnerable*, *difficult*, and *cumbersome* aspects of the current processes and manual according to their experience. The project manager will record and organize the collected data according to category and frequency of occurrence and then apply directly to the area (s) of the program they will affect.

These terms, *vulnerable*, *difficult*, and *cumbersome*, are used deliberately in this Introduction. The word *vulnerable* is used because at the moment there is nowhere the applicant is required to acknowledge upfront their responsibility for federal grant funds other than the signed grant agreement which takes place in the execution phase. Apparently the significance of the signed grant agreement has been lost on some grantees and inappropriate use of funds was occurring anyway. The RTP manager averted a federal audit by promising the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA), the federal fund manager, that administrative controls would be put in place to ensure that applicants are aware, informed, and responsible for, the consequences for mismanaging and fraudulently using federal grant money. The words *difficult* and *cumbersome* are also used here because they are words the RTP manager has heard over and over in reference to the established RTP application process and two of the reasons this project was initiated. These crucial stakeholders, the applicants, have been struggling to use application documents created in old software that isn't compatible with new versions of Microsoft or Macintosh software, that are disorganized, full of mistakes and duplicities, aren't consistent, and are extremely lengthy, and all without a comprehensive instruction manual. One identified problem: it is estimated that over 90% of the applicants have trouble with creating an appropriate and detailed, comprehensive project budget. This is the number one scrutinized part of the applicant's project package. The project manager typically spends more than half her time during both the grant application and the grant approval phases calling, meeting with, and walking through the process with applicants, and gathering the missing or

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incomplete budget detail and documentation. In addition the applications cannot be sent to the advisory board for review if they are incomplete, incorrect, or unprofessional, and it is the project manager's responsibility to ensure the product sent for review meets her professional standards.

During the second semester the project will be broken into two phases. The first phase will develop, with the input gathered from the applicant needs analysis and the internal investigation, an improved application instruction and information manual, as well as developing an applicant responsibility affidavit form that applicants will sign as part of their application package, and the second, and much shorter phase of implementation, will arrange any logistics necessary including cost and time, to have the completed and approved documents posted on the State Trails Program website. This will be completed in the spring of 2015 and will become public during the subsequent grant cycle beginning August 2015.

Project Management Approach

The project management approach for the project will be one that utilizes stakeholder feedback to improve a currently ineffective process. For the purpose of separating the academic work from the project manager's day job, the project manager and the student, who are one in the same person, will be playing two roles in the schedule: one as student in the MSPM Program, and the other as the State Trails Program Coordinator for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and project manager. This approach is being employed in order to separately track the time the project takes for the DNR to reach its program goals and the time it takes the student to reach her academic goals, with the goals being intrinsically linked. The project manager has the overall authority and responsibility for planning, managing, controlling, executing and closing this project according to this PMP and has support from the project's sponsor to do so. The project team will consist of personnel from the DNR although in addition, the project manager will consult with the FHWA RTP administrator. The project manager will consult with these resources to plan, manage, execute and deliver a product that meets the goals of the project, but those resources will not produce any part of any identified deliverables or be in charge of managing any part of the project as defined.

This PMP will consist of several subsidiary plans and processes, in some cases included in the appendices of this document. Plans that are included are: a Scope Management Plan, a Schedule/Time Management Plan, a Cost Management Plan, a Quality Management Plan, a Communications Management Plan, a Risk Management Plan that includes an example of a Risk Register form, a Change Management Plan that identifies a Change Request Form and a Change Log, a Project Progress and Performance Measurement Plan, a Training Criteria and Management Plan, and a Closeout and Acceptance Management Plan. Because the project will be accomplished by one person (project manager) in consultation with an informal and internal team, a Human Resources Management Plan, Staffing Management Plan, and Resource Calendar and will not be necessary. Because nothing will be purchased, a Procurement Management Plan will also not be necessary. All parts of the PMP will have been reviewed by the student's (project manager's) Graduate Committee.

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Project Team

A project team has been identified for the purposes of this project; however, a more specific definition is required. The project team, outside of the sponsor, is comprised of an informal collection of key internal stakeholders whose roles support the goals and outcomes of this project. They play advisory, consulting, and supportive roles but not necessarily work or performance-related roles. They will not produce any part of the identified deliverables and will not participate in the management or scheduling of those deliverables. They will play an important role in the internal investigation portion of the project, where these key stakeholders will identify what they think are the most vulnerable, difficult, and cumbersome issues with the current RTP grant process and application instruction and information manual. I intend to use this collected information to improve the aforementioned process and documents.

Project Research Methods and Approach to Analysis

The research for this project will be qualitative in nature. In addition to a literature review, research will be conducted to determine the most effective and important elements to include in a grant application and information manual for the RTP in Alaska. By conducting an investigation that will include employing an applicant needs-analysis of a selected group of RTP applicants and their review of the current manual, surveying a group of internal stakeholders (project team) that will include State Trails Program staff, DNR staff, and Federal Highways Administration staff, and identifying best practices used by other RTP administrators nation-wide, the project manager will identify the most effective content for the new and improved application instruction and information manual that will become available for the FFY16 grant cycle starting August 2015.

Project Scope

The scope of this project includes the planning, development, and implementation of educational and informational material posted on the State Trails Program website for the applicant to access at any time, and creation and implementation of a required affidavit acknowledging fiscal responsibility by RTP grant applicants in Alaska. Project completion will occur when both the revised application instruction and information manual and the applicant responsibility affidavit are available on the State Trails Program website and applicant acknowledgement of responsibility requirement has been fully integrated with the application submittal process. Starting in the FFY16 RTP grant cycle it will be required that all applicants read the application instruction manual and submit a signed affidavit that they are aware of their fiscal responsibility if awarded federal grant money.

All project work will be performed internally and no portion of this project will be outsourced. The scope includes an applicant needs-analysis and a key stakeholder survey that will both gather information that, when analyzed and integrated, will help improve and make more effective, an existing, yet cumbersome, grant process. The work completed in the scope of this project will be a substantial step in improving the

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overall performance, execution, and integrity of the Recreation Trails Program in Alaska. Although the scope of this phase of the final project will not include an interactive applicant testing or learning platform or any kind of electronic signature, recommendations will be made for future implementation, along with other ideas for process re-engineering and desirable program improvements. At this time the DNR is not sufficiently staffed to accomplish this work. A copy of the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) and high-level WBS Dictionary can be found for reference to specific scope elements in Appendix A.

Milestone List

The table below lists the major milestones for the project. This table is comprised only of major project milestones such as completion of a project phase or gate review. There may be smaller milestones which are not included on this chart but are included in the project schedule and WBS. If there are any scheduling delays which may impact a milestone or delivery date, the project manager will take proactive measures to mitigate the change. See the Change Management Process in this document for more detail about how changes to milestones will be managed and tracked.

Milestone	Description	Due Date
Go/No-Go Decision by MSPM Team	MSPM will allow project manager to continue on to complete PPM4.	October 29, 2014
Project Management Plan (686A)	Approved plan for project execution. Approval from MSPM to proceed to 686 B.	November 26, 2014
Technology/ implementation	Define how material will be administered or hosted on the website and define any associated costs.	January 7, 2015
Conclude survey and investigation	The defined needs-analysis and key stakeholder investigation will be started after IRB has been accepted and <i>Go</i> decision has been granted.	January 15, 2015
Develop Application Instruction and Information Manual and Affidavit form	This will take place after the research is complete and organized into practicable feedback.	March 26, 2015
Capstone Completion (686 B)	Execution of project complete, MSPM presentation complete.	April 20, 2015

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Schedule Baseline and Work Breakdown Structure

The project manager will establish the schedule baseline when the project planning has been approved and the execution phase has begun. This baseline will help with schedule control and management as changes occur throughout the lifecycle of the project. It will be important to begin with clearly understood requirements, accurate costs, and schedule estimates, so vigilant planning is essential.

The WBS for the project is comprised of work packages that include milestones and all associated tasks. The project manager intends to employ the S.M.A.R.T. principle to break down the work into deliverable-oriented work packages (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, **T**ime-oriented) to facilitate accurate work-package cost estimation. Summary work packages in the WBS will be defined in the WBS Dictionary and will assist with task completion and ensure deliverables meet project requirements.

The project's schedule was derived from the WBS and Project Charter. The schedule was established by the project manager and reviewed by the project sponsor. The schedule will be maintained as a Microsoft Project Gantt chart by the project manager. Any proposed changes to the schedule will follow the Change Management Process. If established boundary conditions are exceeded, the project manager or another key stakeholder may decide to initiate a change request. The project manager will determine the impact of the change on the schedule, cost, resources, scope, and risks. If it is determined that the impacts will exceed the boundary conditions then the change will be forwarded to the project sponsor for review and approval. The project's boundary conditions are as follows:

Schedule: If an event occurs that will render the project impossible to accomplish to satisfactory standards by the beginning of the FFY16 grant cycle (August 15, 2015) a decision will be made to either continue the project and adjust the plan to accommodate the schedule change, or to stop the project all together.

Scope: If a requirement is identified that changes the scope of the existing project to the point that it becomes unable to fulfill the goals of the project, a decision will be made to either continue the project and adjust the plan to accommodate the scope change, or to stop the project all together.

Budget: Although budget issues are unlikely in this project due to the fact that the funding is accounted for within the baseline salary of the project manager, if a requirement is identified that increases the budget of the existing project to the point that it becomes unfeasible or impracticable, a decision will be made to either continue the project and adjust the plan to accommodate the budget change, or to stop the project all together.

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Project Management Department, University of Alaska Anchorage

If in any of these cases a change is approved by the project manager or project sponsor, then it will be implemented by the project manager who will update the schedule, budget, and scope documentation in accordance with the Change Management Process. A copy of the initial schedule can be found in Appendix B.

Method for Measuring Project Progress and Performance

The project manager will measure project progress and performance by first establishing baselines for scope and schedule and then tracking the variances throughout the life of the project. Because schedule is one of the most crucial elements of success in this project, measuring the Schedule Performance Indicator (SPI) and staying within acceptable limits will be very important. Stakeholder feedback will be a very important part of the lessons learned part of this project as well as crucial to the overall improvement process for the Project.

Constraints

There are certain constraints that have been identified for this project, and they consist of the following:

Schedule: the MSPM Capstone component of this project imposes several schedule constraints including,

1. October 29, 2014: Go/No Go Decision #1 by MSPM Team
2. November 26, 2014: Go/No Go Decision #2 by MSPM Team
3. April 20, 2014: Capstone Completion 686B

Schedule: Project

1. August 15, 2015: New application instruction and information manual and applicant accountability affidavit must be on the State Trails Program website to begin FFY16 grant cycle.

Budget: The budget is constrained by the fact that all of the work for this project will be included in the baseline cost of the project manager's regular salary. There are no additional funding sources, contractors, or donations.

Scope: The scope will be constrained by the limits identified in the Project Charter. This will need to be monitored in order not to surpass the limits of what is feasible within the time frame and budget allowed.

Assumptions

There are certain assumptions that have been identified for this project, they consist of the following:

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Schedule: It is assumed that the project manager will continue being employed in her position at DNR. It is assumed that the RTP FFY 16 grant cycle will begin August 15, 2015.

Budget: It is assumed that the project manager will continue being employed in her position at DNR, and continue to have support for this project from the sponsor.

Scope: 1) It is assumed that the project manager will continue being employed in her position at DNR, and continue to have support for this project from the sponsor. 2) It is acknowledged that there are problems with the application document itself and that those will be addressed in a subsequent project phase, in order to remain focused on the goal of this project.

Management Plans

Project Scope Management Plan

With concurrence from the project sponsor, scope management for the project will be the sole responsibility and authority of the project manager. The scope for this project is defined by the Scope Statement, WBS, and WBS Dictionary which all help to define the scope baseline. The final project deliverables will be measured against the scope baseline to ensure all of the requirements have been met and the project manager will accept those deliverables as complete.

Proposed scope changes may be initiated by the project manager, key stakeholders, or any member of the project team. All change requests will be submitted to the project manager who will then evaluate the requested scope change. If the submitter is the project manager the change request will be documented for the administrative record and the same process will be followed. The project manager will follow the Change Control Process and update all project documents and communicate the scope change to all team members or key stakeholders.

Schedule/Time Management Plan

The project manager is responsible for facilitating work package definitions, sequencing tasks, and estimating duration and resource allocation. A preliminary schedule has been developed and approved by the project sponsor and it has been base-lined. The more detailed project schedule is being created by the project manager using MS Project 2010 starting with the deliverables identified first in the project's Charter and then in the more detailed WBS. Task and work package identification must happen prior to each deliverable or milestone. Task or work package sequencing will be used to determine the order of those work packages and assign relationships between project activities. Task duration estimating will be used to calculate the number of hours or days required to complete each work package allowing lag or

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Project Management Department, University of Alaska Anchorage

lead time as needed. Resource estimating will be used to allocate identified resources to work packages in order to complete schedule development.

Cost Management Plan

Because this project is small and relies on the project being executed within the confines of the project manager's salaried position there will not be a fully developed or stand-alone Cost Management Plan. However, it should be noted that the project manager will be responsible for tracking costs of all resources involved in the project including that of the "student" who will not have an actual cost but, for reasons of measurement, be valued at \$1/hr.

As mentioned above, the project manager will be responsible for tracking the project's costs throughout the duration of the project, but all budget authority and decisions that includes any large budget changes outside the identified boundaries reside with the project sponsor.

The project manager will be tracking Cost and Schedule Performance Index (CPI and SPI respectively) throughout the project. Once approved, the schedule and budget will record established baseline values. Variances from those baselines of 10% or +/- 0.1 in the cost and schedule performance indexes will change the status of the cost to yellow or cautionary, when presenting status reports. These will be reported, and if it's determined that there is no or minimal impact on the project's cost or schedule baseline, then there may be no action required. Cost variances of 20%, or +/- 0.2 in the cost and schedule performance indexes will change the status of the cost to red or critical. These will be reported and require corrective action from the project manager in order to bring the cost and/or schedule performance indexes back in line with the allowable variance. Any corrective actions, such as fast-tracking, schedule crashing, or de-scoping, will require a project change request and will be managed through the Change Control Process.

Quality Management Plan

Although all members of the project team play a role in quality management, the majority of this responsibility will lie with the project manager. The project manager is responsible for establishing quality standards for each project deliverable in the Quality Management Plan. They are as follows:

- The application instruction and information manual for RTP applicants will be written in common language appropriate for the majority of applicants and easy for most to understand. It will be free of errors and include sufficient and accurate information as to assist the applicants to easily navigate the entire established RTP application. It will contain legal discussion about state and federal procurement law and RTP guidelines and provide the average applicant with a general understanding of the above. The quality assurance criteria will begin with adding tools, information, or structure that respond to the applicant-needs analysis and then by annually evaluating if those needs have been met.

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Project Management Department, University of Alaska Anchorage

- The applicant legal acknowledgement affidavit form will be written in common language appropriate for the majority of applicants and easy for most to understand. It will be free of errors and include a brief introduction to state and federal procurement law and to the definition of grant fraud. It will explain the legal implications of signing a contract for grant money with the federal government and clearly explain the consequences for non-compliance. It will also supply the applicant with additional resources so they may reference supplemental information if required or desired. There will be a place for the applicant to sign their name and the applicant signature will be a required component of all grant applications.

The project manager will regularly review all work packages and deliverables to ensure compliance with these established quality standards, and will sign off on the final acceptance of the project deliverables.

The project manager is responsible for quality management throughout the duration of the project. She is responsible for implementing the Quality Management Plan and ensuring all tasks, processes, and documentation are on track to meet the quality expectations outlined above.

Human Resources Management Plan

The project will not need a Human Resources Management Plan due to its size and predominant reliance on a staff consisting of the project manager and the informal and internal team of advisors.

Staffing Management Plan

The project will not need a Staffing Management Plan due to its size and predominant reliance on a staff consisting of the project manager and the informal and internal team of advisors.

Resource Calendar

Although a Resource Calendar will not be necessary for this project because of the few staff involved, the project will require that both the project manager and the student be available throughout the project and some project team members be available for consultation the entire duration of the project while some will only be required for occasional consultation. The project is scheduled to last five months with 37.5 hour (standard state employee) work weeks.

Communications Management Plan

This Communications Management Plan sets the communications structure for this project. It will serve as a guide for communications throughout the duration of the project and will be updated as

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Project Management Department, University of Alaska Anchorage

communication requirements change. This plan identifies and defines the roles of the project team members as they pertain to communications. It also includes an example of a communications management structure which maps the communication requirements of the project, and communication conduct for meetings and other formats.

Although the project manager will be doing all the planning, information gathering, research, and production of the deliverables, she will be consulting with other key stakeholders as necessary throughout the project and reporting to the sponsor at phase gates and major milestones. The first of these gates was the first MSPM Go/No Go decision by October 29, 2014. At this time the project manager reported to the sponsor to let him know the academic project will continue and shared updated information about the schedule and milestones.

The project manager will take the lead role in ensuring effective communications on this project. The communications requirements are documented in the example communications management structure below. This will be used as the guide for what information to communicate, who is to do the communicating, when to communicate it, and with whom to communicate.

Example Communication Management structure:

Communication Type	Description	Frequency or Timing	Format/ Method	Participants/ Distribution	Deliverable	Sender
Status Report	Email summary of project status	Monthly	Email	Graduate Committee	Status Report	Project Manager
Status Report	Project Status/ Discussion	Bi/Weekly	In Person	Graduate Advisor	Status Report	Project Manager
Status Report	Meeting to review action register and status	At phase gates	In Person	Project Sponsor Project Team	Status Report	Project Manager

Project team directory for all communications is:

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Project Management Department, University of Alaska Anchorage

Name	Title	E mail	Office Phone
Ben Ellis	Project Sponsor	ben.ellis@alaska.gov	907-269-8701
Darcy Harris	Project Manager	darcy.harris@alaska.gov	907-269-8699
Steve Neel	DPOR Grants Administrator	steve.neel@alaska.gov	907-269-8709
Justin Wholey	Natural Resource Specialist	justin.wholey@alaska.gov	907-269-8698
Marlys Hagen	State Procurement Officer	marlys.hagen@alaska.gov	907-269-8666
Steve Schmidt	Accountant for DNR	steve.r.schmitz@alaska.gov	907-465-3771
Jamie Walker	DPOR Administrative Operations Manager	jamie.walker@alaska.gov	907-269-8703
Paul Wistrand	FHWA RTP Administrator in AK	Paul.Wistrand@dot.gov	907-586-7148

Communications Conduct:

Email:

All email pertaining to the project will be professional, free of errors, and provide brief and clear communication. If the email is to discuss a pertinent issue or potential needed change then it should discuss what the issue is, provide a brief background on the issue, and provide a recommendation to correct the issue. The project manager should be included on any email pertaining to the project. All email should be regarded as part of the administrative record. Because public money is being spent on this project and the work is being accomplished by a public employee all electronic communications may become subject to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) records request. If there are things that must be discussed via email and are deliberative in nature and would not be appropriate to expose to the public as-is, clearly state in the subject line "Confidential/ DELIBERATIVE MATERIAL". If the communication is requested in a FOIA, the Department of Law may redact those communications delineated as confidential or deliberative.

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Informal Communications:

Any issues, concerns, or updates or potential needed changes that arise from informal discussion between team members must be communicated to the project manager so the appropriate action may be taken. If there is anything discussed in an informal setting that needs to become part of the administrative record, it is requested that the owner of that discussion or a designee, send a recap of the discussion in an email to the project team.

Risk Management Plan

The approach for managing risks for the project includes a method by which the project manager along with consultation with the project team of key stakeholders identifies the various risks. Every effort will be made to proactively identify risks ahead of time in order to implement a mitigation strategy from the project's beginning.

During the closing process, the project manager will analyze each risk as well as the risk management process. Based on this analysis and experiences throughout the project, the project manager will identify any improvements that can be made to the risk management process for future projects. These improvements will be captured as part of the lessons learned archive.

Risk Register

The Risk Register for this project is provided in Appendix C.

Procurement Management Plan

This project will be performing all necessary consulting and deliverable development within the DNR and within the fiscal constraints of the project manager's salaried position. No purchases will be necessary or made for the successful completion of this project and thus no Procurement Management Plan will be necessary.

Change Management Plan

Because of the relatively small size of this project scope and staff, a standalone Change Management Plan document is not necessary, but instead, a Change Management Process is outlined below.

This Change Management Process is intended for the project manager, project sponsor, and any identified key stakeholders whose support is needed to accomplish the project. It is intended to establish an

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Project Management Department, University of Alaska Anchorage

organized and effective process for tracking the collection, review, implementation, and coordination of all changes to the project from its beginning.

Process Flow

The following steps comprise the Change Management Process Flow for all project milestones and will be utilized on the project:

1. Submitter, either a key stakeholder or project manager, identifies the need for a change.
2. The Submitter will complete a change request form (Appendix D) to the project manager. If the Submitter is the project manager the form still will be filled out and retained as part of the administrative record and to assist in the lessons learned process.
3. The project manager will log the change request in the change request register that will be maintained for the duration of the project.
4. The project manager will conduct an evaluation of the impact of the change to cost, risk, schedule, and scope. This evaluation may be conducted with the help of the project team or key stakeholders.
5. The project manager will discuss with other key stakeholders if the identified change is considered to have a significant impact to the project.
6. If the change request suggests a significant change that exceeds the established boundary conditions, the sponsor will need to approve the change. In all other cases the project manager will approve the change after consultation with team members. See Schedule Baseline and Work Breakdown Structure for description of boundary conditions.
7. If a change is made, the project manager will update and re-baseline the project documentation as necessary as well as ensure any changes are communicated to the other key stakeholders.

Step	Description
Generate Change Request (CR)	A Submitter completes a CR form and sends the completed form to the project manager
Log Change Request Status	The project manager enters the CR into the Change Log (Appendix E). The CR's status is updated throughout the CR process as needed.
Evaluate Change Request	Project personnel review the CR and provide an estimated level of effort to process, and develop a proposed solution for the suggested change
Authorize	Approval to move forward with incorporating the suggested change into the project/product
Implement	If approved, make the necessary adjustments to carry out the requested change and communicate CR status to the submitter and other stakeholders

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Project Management Department, University of Alaska Anchorage

Change Log

Any team member or stakeholder may submit a change request for the project. All change requests will be logged in the change control register by the project manager and tracked through to completion whether approved or not. A Change Log can be found in Appendix E.

Training Criteria and Management Plan

The purpose of this plan is to define and organize content and quality expectations for the project deliverables.

Application Instruction and Information Manual

An application instruction and information manual for RTP applicants in Alaska will be produced that contains input and suggestions from former RTP applicants gathered in an applicant needs analysis survey and information collected from the team of key internal stakeholders involved with the administration of the program. This will contain applicant accountability and guidance material. Training in this plan is defined as what and how information will be structured and administered in this deliverable. Although not all of the information is known at this time, and will be derived from the two surveys being conducted for this project, it will help add structure and quality expectation for that document.

The manual will be organized so that it is synchronized with the application. As a side note: there are things that need fixing in the application as well but the largest issues in that document will need to be addressed in phase II in order to keep the scope of this project focused on helping applicants in the most efficient way possible. See Assumptions page 8 of this document.

Application Instruction and Information Manual Outline

The layout of the manual will begin with an introduction about the RTP and the advisory board. It will have a Table of Contents to assist an applicant with finding the answer to a specific question, and program background and discussion of the funding source to help build the big picture. It will prioritize, after the introduction, the most important things to know about the process or application. This idea stems from the standard structure for news or press releases. Some people may only read the first few sentences or paragraphs and move on, so an author should put all the essential information right at the beginning.

The document will then continue on to discuss logistics of the application documents and where to find additional resources such as Frequently Asked Questions, Sample Score Sheet, Programmatic Agreement, Environmental Review checklist, grant reporting documents, etc. State and federal procurement rules and law including permissible and non-permissible use of federal grant funds will be included as well as the definition of Grant Fraud.

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Project Management Department, University of Alaska Anchorage

The document will then be structured so it may be used side by side with the application. Section 1 instruction corresponds with Section 1 application questions, and so on. The document will inform applicants of how their application will be scored and how many points each question or Section is worth.

When it comes to specific Section directions, for example, how to create a perfect project budget sheet, there will be examples and Frequently Asked Questions included. Some of this information will be derived from the research and analysis surveys, direct customer feedback, and some will come from the manager's experience.

The manual will walk the applicant through the entire process including how to create and provide accurate and timely reports and be reimbursed, all the way through grant closure.

Environmental review is an important component of applicant compliance and the process will be discussed and supplemented with agency contact information.

The quality assurance criteria will begin with adding tools, structure and information that responds to the applicant-needs analysis and then by annually evaluating if those tools have met those needs.

Applicant Accountability Affidavit

An affidavit form will be created for grant applicants to read and sign, acknowledging their legal responsibility for federal grant funds (if awarded) and knowledge of state and federal procurement law as it applies to them in the RTP. This form will be one page, give a brief description of the state and federal laws pertaining to the RTP, briefly define grant fraud, and have a place where the applicant can sign their name that they have read and understand the importance of this information. It will be written in language that most applicants will be able to read and understand and list additional resources if the applicant requires further information. By the time it is complete, public, and a required part of the application process, it will have been reviewed and approved by internal experts, such as the State Procurement Officer, the Administrative Operations Manager for the DPOR, and the sponsor.

Closeout and Acceptance Management Process

Project Management: During the Project Closeout and Acceptance phase the project manager will ensure all parts of the Project Management Plan have been completed and to the level of quality expected, including all deliverables completed to the level of quality expected.

Sponsor Acceptance: In order for the project to be complete it must be accepted by the sponsor. To document this, the sponsor will complete a project satisfaction survey acknowledging that the goals and deliverables for the project have been met and produced, and at an acceptable quality.

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Project Management Department, University of Alaska Anchorage

Change: During the closing process, the project manager will analyze each approved and implemented change as well as the Change Management Process. Based on this analysis and experiences throughout the project, the project manager will identify any improvements that can be made to the risk management process for future projects. These improvements will be captured as part of the lessons learned archive.

Risk: During the closing process, the project manager will analyze each risk as well as the Risk Management Process. Based on this analysis and experiences throughout the project, the project manager will identify any improvements that can be made to the Risk Management Process for future projects. These improvements will be captured as part of the lessons learned archive.

An example of the Project Closeout Checklist with example items can be found in Appendix F.

Lessons Learned

The Lessons Learned Log will be utilized throughout the project to record both occurrences that did not go as planned, or went wrong, and those that went well and bear repeating in other projects. All Lessons Learned will be captured in the Administrative Record after project closure.

An example of the Lessons Learned Log to be used throughout the project can be found in Appendix G.

Sponsor Acceptance

Approved by the Project Sponsor:



Director, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

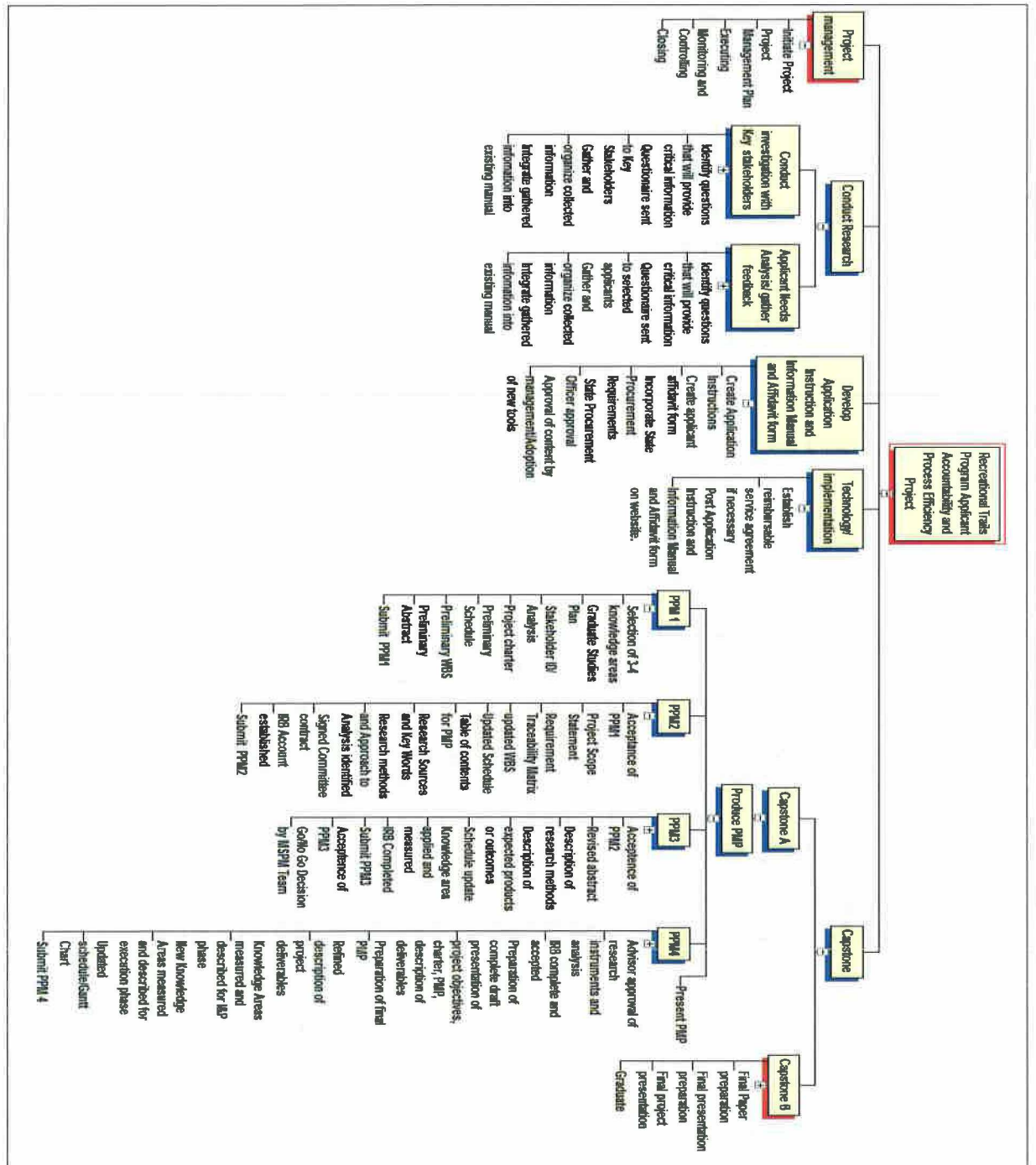
12-4-2014

Date

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Appendix A: Work Breakdown Structure and Associated Dictionary



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WBS Code	WBS Element
1.1	Project Management
WBS Element Description	
<i>The Project was initiated with a signed Charter in September 2014. The process of developing the Charter included identifying the project need and preliminary scope definition, performing a high level stakeholder analysis, creating a high level schedule, requirements list, budget, and list of risks. It required Sponsor signature and approval to begin the project. Project management will continue throughout the project and be facilitated by the guidance of the Project Management Plan. Once approved, the PMP will provide controls to monitor, control, and closeout the execution of the project successfully.</i>	
WBS Code	WBS Element
1.2	Conduct Research
WBS Element Description	
<i>The conduct research component consists of two parts: Conduct investigation with key stakeholders and Applicant Needs Analysis/ gather feedback. When these tasks are complete and approved by the project manager they will provide essential stakeholder feedback that, once integrated, will improve the efficiency and integrity of the Recreational Trails Program in Alaska.</i>	
WBS Code	WBS Element
1.2.1	Conduct Investigation with key stakeholders
WBS Element Description	
<i>This work package will consist of sending key internal stakeholders. already involved with the administration of the RTP, a short survey asking them how they think the program and application processes can improve.</i>	
WBS Code	WBS Element
1.2.2	Applicant needs analysis, gather feedback
WBS Element Description	
<i>This work package will consist of sending a variety of RTP applicants with different experience levels, a short survey asking them how they think the program and application processes can improve.</i>	
WBS Code	WBS Element
1.3	Develop Application Instruction and Information Manual and Affidavit form
WBS Element Description	
<i>The development of these documents and the integration of the investigation results are crucial for success of this project.</i>	
WBS Code	WBS Element
1.3.1	Create Application Instructions
WBS Element Description	
<i>The project manager will survey applicants and key internal stakeholders as well as walk through the entire application process in detail to create a comprehensive Application Instruction and Information Manual.</i>	
WBS Code	WBS Element
1.4	Technology/ Implementation
WBS Element Description	

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Project Management Department, University of Alaska Anchorage

The project manager will work with the Information Resources Management Division of the DNR to make the produced documents available to all applicants on the State Trails Program webpage.

WBS Code	WBS Element
<i>1.4.1</i>	<i>Establish Reimbursable Service Agreement (RSA) if necessary</i>

WBS Element Description
If it is determined to be necessary a RSA will be established in order to pay for the time of the IRM department to post the new and improved documents on the State website.

WBS Code	WBS Element
<i>1.5</i>	<i>Capstone</i>

WBS Element Description
The Capstone component of the project will be performed by the "Student" resource and follow the schedule and constraints set by the MSPM Department. This part of the project is subject to time measurement valued at \$1/hr and being separately tracked from the project manger's time being tracked at a different value.

WBS Code	WBS Element
<i>1.5.1</i>	<i>Capstone A</i>

WBS Element Description
This set of elements details the required deliverables and milestones for the first semester of MSPM 686 for the student.

WBS Code	WBS Element
<i>1.5.2</i>	<i>Capstone B</i>

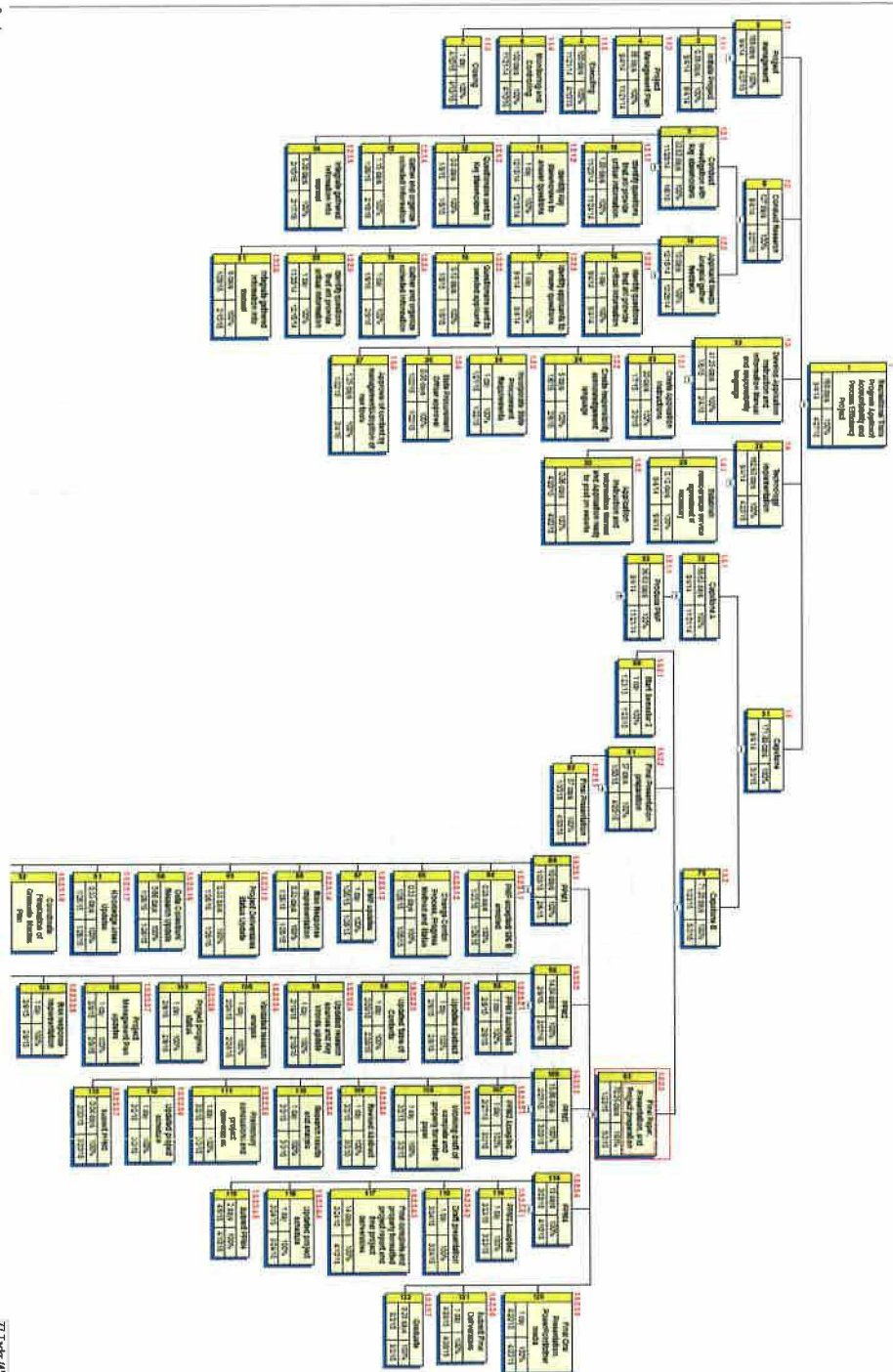
WBS Element Description
This set of elements details the required deliverables and milestones for the second and final semester of MSPM 686 for the student.

Appendix B: Tracking Gantt, Final Schedule, WBS

Task Name	Duration	Work	Baseline	BCWS	BCPV	Type	Start	Finish	Predecessors	Resource	Constraint	Cost	% Complete	Actual Work	Actual Cost	SP	CP
1	✓	- Recreational Trails Program Applicant	1,395.92 hrs	\$27,180.29	\$26,295.49	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 4/27/15		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$26,504.26	100%	1,395.92 hrs	\$26,504.26	0.97	0.99
2	✓	- Project management 688 days	291 hrs 291 hrs	\$13,451.82	\$13,451.82	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 4/27/15		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$13,451.82	100%	291 hrs	\$13,451.82	1	1
3	✓	- Initial Project 0.38 days	3 hrs 3 hrs	\$189.60	\$189.60	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Thu 9/4/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$189.60	100%	3 hrs	\$189.60	1	1
4	✓	- Project Management 56 days	40 hrs 40 hrs	\$2,528.00	\$2,528.00	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Fri 11/12/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$2,528.00	100%	40 hrs	\$2,528.00	1	1
5	✓	- Erecting 100 days	120 hrs 120 hrs	\$5,096.00	\$5,096.00	Fixed	Fri 11/22/14	Fri 4/4/15		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$5,096.00	100%	120 hrs	\$5,096.00	1	1
6	✓	- Monitoring and Cor 100 days	120 hrs 120 hrs	\$5,096.00	\$5,096.00	Fixed	Fri 11/22/14	Fri 4/4/15		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$5,096.00	100%	120 hrs	\$5,096.00	1	1
7	✓	- Chasing 1 day	8 hrs 8 hrs	\$542.22	\$542.22	Fixed	Fri 4/10/15	Mon 4/3/15		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$542.22	100%	8 hrs	\$542.22	1	1
8	✓	- Conduct Research 427 days	108.55 hrs 108.55 hrs	\$6,200.94	\$5,346.14	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Fri 2/27/15		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$5,346.14	100%	108.55 hrs	\$5,346.14	0.86	1.01
9	✓	- Conduct research 33.63 days	48.55 hrs 48.55 hrs	\$1,522.54	\$1,522.54	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Fri 2/27/15		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$1,522.54	100%	48.55 hrs	\$1,522.54	1	1
10	✓	- Identify question 1.85 days	1.05 hrs 1.05 hrs	\$66.21	\$66.21	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$66.21	100%	1.05 hrs	\$66.21	1	1
11	✓	- Identify Key Site 1 day	1 hr 1 hr	\$63.20	\$63.20	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$63.20	100%	1 hr	\$63.20	1	1
12	✓	- Questionnaire 0.5 days	1 hr 1 hr	\$63.20	\$63.20	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$63.20	100%	1 hr	\$63.20	1	1
13	✓	- Gather and org 1.15 days	3 hrs 8 hrs	\$126.18	\$126.18	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$126.18	100%	3 hrs	\$126.18	1	1
14	✓	- Integrate gather 5.33 days	37.5 hrs 37.5 hrs	\$1,203.75	\$1,203.75	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$1,203.75	100%	37.5 hrs	\$1,203.75	1	1
15	✓	- Applicant Meetings 40 days	60 hrs 74.5 hrs	\$3,570.00	\$3,570.00	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$3,570.00	100%	60 hrs	\$3,570.00	1.01	1.01
16	✓	- Identify question 1 day	8 hrs 8 hrs	\$505.60	\$505.60	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$505.60	100%	8 hrs	\$505.60	1	1
17	✓	- Identify question 1 day	8 hrs 8 hrs	\$505.60	\$505.60	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$505.60	100%	8 hrs	\$505.60	1	1
18	✓	- Questionnaire 0.13 days	1 hr 1 hr	\$63.20	\$63.20	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$63.20	100%	1 hr	\$63.20	1	1
19	✓	- Gather and org 1 day	4 hrs 4 hrs	\$252.80	\$252.80	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$252.80	100%	4 hrs	\$252.80	1	1
20	✓	- Identify question 1 day	2 hrs 2 hrs	\$126.40	\$126.40	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$126.40	100%	2 hrs	\$126.40	1	1
21	✓	- Integrate gather 6 days	37 hrs 37.5 hrs	\$2,370.00	\$2,370.00	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$2,370.00	100%	37 hrs	\$2,370.00	1	1
22	✓	- Develop Application 41.25 days	108.55 hrs 108.55 hrs	\$6,793.95	\$5,793.95	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$5,793.95	100%	108.55 hrs	\$5,793.95	0.98	0.98
23	✓	- Create Application 20 days	80 hrs 80 hrs	\$5,096.00	\$5,096.00	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$5,096.00	100%	80 hrs	\$5,096.00	1	1
24	✓	- Create responsible 5 days	5.53 hrs 5.53 hrs	\$232.55	\$232.55	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$232.55	100%	5.53 hrs	\$232.55	1	1
25	✓	- Incorporate State F 1 day	2 hrs 2 hrs	\$126.40	\$126.40	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$126.40	100%	2 hrs	\$126.40	1	1
26	✓	- State Procurement 0.05 days	0.4 hrs 0.4 hrs	\$50.00	\$50.00	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$50.00	100%	0.4 hrs	\$50.00	1	1
27	✓	- Approval of contract 1.25 days	2 hrs 2 hrs	\$215.00	\$215.00	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$215.00	100%	2 hrs	\$215.00	1	1
28	✓	- Technology transfer 162.63 days	2.47 hrs 2.47 hrs	\$166.42	\$166.42	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$166.42	100%	2.47 hrs	\$166.42	1	1
29	✓	- Establish network 0.12 days	1.97 hrs 1.97 hrs	\$131.42	\$131.42	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$131.42	100%	1.97 hrs	\$131.42	1	1
30	✓	- Application instruction and 0.06 days	0.5 hrs 0.5 hrs	\$35.00	\$35.00	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$35.00	100%	0.5 hrs	\$35.00	1	1
31	✓	- Capstone 171.88 days	903.97 hrs 790.97 hrs	\$1,651.16	\$1,651.16	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$1,651.16	100%	903.97 hrs	\$1,651.16	0.94	0.94
32	✓	- Capstone A 56.63 days	211.62 hrs 211.62 hrs	\$1,082.42	\$1,082.42	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$1,082.42	100%	211.62 hrs	\$1,082.42	1	1
33	✓	- Produce PMP 56.63 days	211.62 hrs 211.62 hrs	\$1,082.42	\$1,082.42	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$1,082.42	100%	211.62 hrs	\$1,082.42	1	1
79	✓	- Capstone B 71.25 days	692.33 hrs 579.33 hrs	\$692.04	\$692.04	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$692.04	100%	692.33 hrs	\$692.04	0.83	0.83
80	✓	- Start Semester 1 day	1 hr 1 hr	\$1.00	\$1.00	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$1.00	100%	1 hr	\$1.00	0	0
81	✓	- Final Present 57 days	456 hrs 456 hrs	\$456.00	\$456.00	Fixed	Thu 9/4/14	Mon 11/3/14		As Soon As Possible	As Soon As Possible	\$456.00	100%	456 hrs	\$456.00	1	1

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77 tasks (45 hrs)

Appendix C: Risk Register

RISK REGISTER

Recreational Trails Program Applicant

Project Title: Accountability and Process Efficiency Project

Date Updated: December 8, 2014

Risk Statement	Probability (P)	Impact (I)				Score (P x I)	Response
		Scope	Quality	Schedule	Cost		
If the Federal gas tax trust fund is not funded after May the RTP will no longer be funded.	<5%	100%	100%	100%	0%	.05	Specific project will be cancelled but idea may be transferred to another grant program.
If there is neither a new national transportation bill nor a continuing resolution the RTP will not be funded.	<1%	100%	100%	100%	100%	.01%	Specific project will be cancelled but idea may be transferred to another grant program.
If the application instructions are not approved for publication the applicants will not have that tool at their disposal during the next grant cycle.	<5%			100%	0%	.05%	If the project is not ready to implement by August 15 2015, the start of the new FFY16 RTP grant cycle the program will move forward anyway but without an improved manual. Without the improved manual the applicants will still struggle through the application process, requiring a great deal of management and assistance. The project manager would modify the instructions to meet the requirements of management and keep modifying until accepted.
If grant fraud is identified in the program before there are controls in place to prevent it, an audit may occur and funding may be jeopardized.	<10%			75%	100%	S: .075 C: .1%	If the funding is cut or the schedule lengthened past boundary conditions the project will be impacted negatively. However, encountering fraud might provide an opportunity for testing the practicability of the program and show the FHWA that DNR is serious about controlling for, and preventing grant fraud.
If IRBS is not accepted research will not be allowed and data will not be collected, making stakeholder feedback for improvement difficult.	<1%	75%	75%	100%	0%	S: .0075% Q: .0075% S: 0.01%	Data will have to be gathered another way or borrow from another data set such as national best practice.

11

6	if the State governing administration changes after the election- November 4- there may be a new Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation Director.	30%					0%		This will not make much difference unless the new Director does not want to be the project sponsor. If and when there is a new Director the project manager will talk with that person and explain the project to them.
7	Currently the Director is the project's Sponsor. If the new Director does not want to be the Sponsor a new one will be found.	<5%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	S:0.05% Q: 0.05% S:0.05%	If the new Director does not want to be the Sponsor a new one will be found.

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Appendix D: Change Request Form

Change Request Form

Version: 1.0

Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project Change Request Form

SUBMITTER - GENERAL INFORMATION			
Change Request #			
Submitter Name			
Brief Description of Request			
Date Submitted			
Date Required			
Priority	<input type="checkbox"/> Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory
Reason for Change			
Areas Impacted			
Assumptions and Notes			
Attachments or References	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Link:			

INITIAL ANALYSIS	
Hour Impact	
Duration Impact	
Schedule Impact	
Budget Impact	
Scope Impact	
Comments	
Recommendations	

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Appendix E: Change Log

Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project

Change Log Final

Change Log							
Project: Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project						Date started: September 23, 2014	
Status: Open: O, Closed: C, Pending: P							
Change No.	Change Type	Description of Change	Requestor	Date Submitted/ Approved	Date Implemented	Status	Comments
1	Budget	Updated budget to reflect PM time values at \$1/hr as suggested after PPM1.	DBH	9/23/2014 →	9/23/2014 →	C	
2	Scope	Refined Scope in the Charter.	DBH	9/23/2014	9/23/2014	C	
3	Scope	Added revision log to Charter.	DBH	9/24/2014	9/24/2014	C	
4	Scope	Clarified acceptance criteria.	DBH	9/24/2014	9/24/2014	C	
5	Scope	Revised requirements traceability matrix.	DBH	9/24/2014	9/24/2014	C	
6	Scope	Improved clarity of project title.	DBH	9/24/2014	9/24/2014	C	
7	Budget	Revised schedule plan to include a resource called <i>student</i> valued at \$1/hr and keep the resource of Trails Program Coordinator valued at actual \$63.2/hr. this will be updated in the Charter budget discussion.	DBH	10/1/2014	10/1/2014	C	
8	Scope	After consultation with Committee member decided on research methodology and included in scope.	DBH	10/2/2014	10/2/2014	C	
9	Scope	Revised identified final deliverables.	DBH	10/2/2014	10/2/2014	C	

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10	Scope	Identified that working with IRM Division will be minimal cost in time and money due to prearranged Reimbursable Service Agreement (RSA) already in place and minimal amount of time required to post new documents on State Trails Program website.	DBH	12/15/2014	12/15/2014	C	
11	Scope	With stakeholder feedback I have decided to slightly change / soften the approach for the legal "affidavit" deliverable. I am not going to have the language in a separate "affidavit" document but add similar language to the signature page of the application.	DBH	1/27/2015	1/27/2015	C	
12	Scope	The PMP describes the project as two distinct phases. Phase 1 will develop the products and phase 2 will implement them by posting them on the website. The products will still be ready to post on the website at the completion of this project but that posting does not need to be a discrete phase, as it will not take significant time or money to accomplish. This joining of the two identified phases is only a change in the PMP. A small administrative change.	DBH	3/5/2015	3/5/2015	C	

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Appendix F: Project Closeout

See Tab 5.2 for Final Project Closeout

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Appendix G: Lessons Learned Log

Lessons Learned Log

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Version: 1.0

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Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project

Lessons Learned Log

Category	Issue Name	Problem/Success	Impact	Recommendation
Scope Management	Scope Creep	There are so many opportunities for scope creep when taking on a program improvement project. Much of the literature and best practice research that was done inspired new ideas and additional ways the program could be directed. Although it is very important to stay within an approved scope of work, there is no limit to the value of inspiration. Every time I had an idea I identified as scope creep I wrote it down as something I could do or incorporate, or improve later, within another project scope.	Minimal, as it was identified as a potential risk	PM identified all other areas of needed programmatic change and logged them for future improvements.
Time Management	IRB Schedule	Time allotted in project schedule to prepare IRB submittal, advisor review, and final documents submittal took a longer time than the project manager had anticipated.	This caused the start of the survey to be delayed slightly.	Start IRB research and submittal process as early as possible and anticipate delays.
Time Management	Tracking time	It was more difficult than originally anticipated to track the student work time and the project	Learning experience	Have a good system of time accountability.

Harris, Darcy

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MSPM 686B SPR 2015

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Harris, Darcy

MSPM 686B SPR 2015

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Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project

Lessons Learned Log

		manager's work time, being one in the same person. The project manager found that the line between the work needed to accomplish the project and the school work was blurry and she didn't want to count her time twice.		
Time Management	Response Time	Don't underestimate the time it takes people to get back to you.	Learned and adapted schedule and communication techniques.	Communicate clearly about your requirement. Add specific deadlines and expectations along with your question.
Communications Management	Email files	It may be helpful to always copy yourself on all communications. As busy project managers we can go back to reference where we were in any given conversation with any stakeholder. This is especially helpful when there are many stakeholders and many different conversations happening simultaneously.	Opportunity to keep good records and be organized.	same
Change Management	Changes to scope	If changes are not recorded right away they may miss being recorded at all.	minimal	Stay on top of change management and follow the approved process.

Appendix H: Stakeholder Register

STAKEHOLDER REGISTER

Recreational Trails Program Applicant
Accountability and Process Efficiency

Project Title: Project

Date Prepared: December 8, 2014

Name	Position	Role	Contact Information	Requirements	Expectations	Influence
Ben Ellis	Director of DPOR	Sponsor	ben.ellis@alaska.gov 907-269-8701	Do not surprise! Give him a heads up if there is anything that will effect him.	Keep informed only as will effect him.	High
Mark Myers	Commissioner of DNR	No role unless needed or required for high level decision or if audit were to take place.	mark.myers@alaska.gov 907-269-8431	Keep informed if something that could effect DNR integrity arises.	No communication will be necessary unless we need high level decisions made.	High
Claire LeClair	Deputy Director DPOR	Operations Manager, field staff supervisor	Claire.leclair@alaska.gov 907-269-8702	Keep informed if project requirements will effect her field staff.	Only keep her informed at high level unless something directly effects her field staff or the Division.	med
Darcy Harris	State Trails Program Manager	Project manager	darcy.harris@alaska.gov 907-269-8699	Satisfy stakeholder requirements	Put in place controls to ensure compliance of state and federal laws and guidance.	High

1 | Page

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Steve Neel	DPOIR Grants Administrator	Essential program support team member	steve.neel@alaska.gov 907-269-8709	Consult with him about program and grantees. Double check numbers with him.	That as a program we follow the law and do not get into trouble.	med
Marty's Hagen	State Procurement Officer	State level authority, oversees fiscal compliance for DNR	marty's.hagen@alaska.gov 907-269-8666	Keep her in the loop at high level. Inform her of how this project will help DNR be in compliance.	Wants to be assured of state law compliance	med
Jamie Walker	DPOIR Administrative Operations Manager	Division level authority, oversees fiscal compliance for DPOIR	jamie.walker@alaska.gov 907-269-8703	Keep her in the loop about project progress, in writing so there is a record.	Wants to see controls in place for state compliance	high
Justin Wholey	Natural Resource Specialist	Trails Program Team	justin.wholey@alaska.gov 907-269-8698	Keep informed, useful insights, works closely with applications	Team member	med
Paul Wistrand	FHWA RTP administrator in AK	Federal program manager	Paul.Wistrand@dot.gov 907-586-7148	Keep informed. He is willing to help and answer questions as necessary.	Wants to see controls in place for federal compliance	high
ORTAB	Advisory Board	Advisory Board Chairman	Jeff Budd jbudd3500@yahoo.com	Keep informed, his opinions and advice are important to Director's decisions.	To be in the loop of decisions regarding the RTP.	Med-high
Patty Robinson	Manager and contact at Technology /	Will lead work on tech interface of	Patty.robinson@alaska.gov 907-269-8860	RSA in place to pay for staff time. Curriculum of sufficient quality for	That PM follows through on payment and quality	low

2 | Page

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	Information Resource Management Division	curriculum		publication	expectation	
Grantees/Applicants	Customers	Customers of grant program	various	They will need to know how this will effect the application process Training and consulting will be available	Grant program will be available to fund their projects	med
Trail Crews/ Alaska Conservation Corps	Customers	Work on grant funded trail projects	various	They need to be informed of proper use of federal grant money because they will be in the field executing the grant.	They will have funded work	low
Trail Building Contractors	Customers	Work on grant funded trail projects	various	They need to be informed of proper use of federal grant money because they will be in the field executing the grant, and depending on reimbursement.	They will have funded work	low

Appendix I: Requirements Traceability Matrix

REQUIREMENTS TRACEABILITY MATRIX

Recreational Trails Program Applicant
Accountability and Process Efficiency

Project Title: Project

Date Prepared: November 21, 2014

Requirement Information					Relationship Traceability				
ID	Requirement	Priority	Category	Source	Relates to Objective	WBS Identifier	Acceptance Criteria	Validation Method and Measure	Owner
1	Complete an approved project management plan	High	MSPM	MSPM	Presentation of PM Plan	Capstone	Approved to move forward to 686 B	Approval to move forward to 686 B	Project manager
2	Program requires legal infrastructure to protect DNR	High	Legal	Sponsor	Improve legal coverage for DNR	Create affidavit form.	Have legal framework in place in case of audit or fraud	Content validated and approved by management	Project manager
3	Improve efficiency of program administration	High	Educational material development	Sponsor	Training available on internet	Post Application Instruction and Information Manual and Affidavit form on website.	Spend less staff time coaching applicants	Spend less staff time coaching applicants	Project manager
4	Develop application instruction and information manual	High	Educational material development	Project manager	Training available to applicants on internet.	Educational material development / Create content	Educational material developed to meet scope and schedule requirements.	Educational material approved and on schedule.	Project manager
5	Receive approval of accountability and informational material	High	Educational material development	Project manager	Training available to applicants on internet.	Educational material development / Create content	Educational material developed to meet scope and schedule requirements.	Educational material approved and on schedule.	Project manager

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REQUIREMENTS TRACEABILITY MATRIX

6	Applicants affirm their responsibility for grant money.	High	Legal	Administrative Operations Manager	Applicant responsibility affidavit form available on Trails Program Website	Create affidavit form.	Signed the approved form	Signed form on file.	Project manager
7	Incorporate State Procurement requirements	High	Educational material development	Administrative Operations Manager/ Project Manager	Educational material approved	State Procurement Officer Approval	Verbal or written approval	Verbal or written approval	Project manager
8	The required accountability and application material will be available on the State Trails Program website for applicants to access at their convenience prior to application deadline.	High	Technology	Project manager	Training available on internet.	Technology/ Implementation	Available and functional on website	Available and functional on website	PM with IRM Division
9	Adopt institutional controls to ensure grant contract compliance.	High	Legal	FHWA	Applicant responsibility affidavit form available on Trails Program Website	Create affidavit form.	Content validated and approved by management	Content validated and approved by management	Project Manager

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Appendix J: Initial Project Abstract

Project Abstract

There is a significant lack of understanding on the part of new grant applicants and current grantees, about state and federal procurement requirements and how they directly relate to the federal programmatic guidelines for the Recreational Trails Program. This lack of understanding translates into many hours of coaching the applicants and answering their questions. As the manager of this program it is my responsibility to ensure compliance with federal and state laws, as well as program guidance, and there are currently no tools to consistently achieve this complex task. As an added benefit, when applicants become more knowledgeable, they will be more self sufficient and require less staff time to assist them with the grant application process.

This project idea accommodates two needs. It helps educate the applicants, enabling them to be more successful throughout the entire grant process, and it protects the State of Alaska, DNR, legally, because the applicants will be informed of the rules and regulations surrounding procurement and federal grants and will have acknowledged their personal responsibility to engage the program with integrity.

This project will develop an application instruction and information manual for Recreational Trails Program applicants in Alaska about how to apply for funding and comply with federal and state fiscal regulations and programmatic guidelines. It will be available on the State Trails Program website for applicants to access at their convenience. In addition the project will create an accountability affidavit where each applicant will acknowledge and sign their name that that they are responsible and accountable for federal grant funds, and that signed document will be required as part of their application.

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Appendix K: Project Charter

Project Charter: Recreational Trails Program Process Improvement

Project Title: Recreational Trails Program Process Improvement

Project Sponsor: Ben Ellis, Director of DPOR Date prepared: September 4, 2014

Project Manager: Darcy Harris Project Customer: DNR and RTP applicants and grantees

Project Purpose or Justification: Business Case or Need

I have identified that there is a significant lack of understanding on the part of new grant applicants and current grantees, about state and federal procurement requirements and how they directly relate to the federal programmatic guidelines for the Recreational Trails Program. This poses a two-fold problem. It takes an enormous amount of staff time to coach applicants through the lengthy grant process and as the manager of this program it is my responsibility to ensure compliance with federal and state laws, as well as program guidance, and there are currently no tools to consistently achieve these complex tasks.

Project Description: Abbreviated Statement of Work

This project will create a required training curriculum, and companion application instructions for Recreational Trails Program applicants in Alaska about how to apply for funding and comply with federal and state fiscal regulations and programmatic guidelines. The training will be available on the State Trails Program website for applicants to take at their leisure; however a printed and signed completion verification sheet will be required with their application. (This may be recorded digitally depending on the interface used.)

The first semester I will develop a project management plan for this project, and initiate communication with the IRM division regarding technical support. During the second semester I will break this project into two phases. I intend to both develop the application instructions that will be a companion and precursor to the on-line training, and organize the technical requirements for hosting this curriculum on the web. This will be followed up by developing the final, on-line content in a web-based training where applicants will need to participate and verify this participation as part of the requirements for application. This will be completed in the spring of 2015 and will become public during the subsequent grant cycle, August 2015. This curriculum and web-interface will be iterative and subject to stakeholder feedback.

Project and Product Requirements:

Training and application instructions will be available on the internet for applicants to access at their convenience. This will increase applicant success and require less staff time for the Trails Program throughout the process. Applicants will also acknowledge their responsibility for the information and all legal requirements.

Acceptance Criteria:

Training available to applicants on the internet to accompany companion application instructions.
Acknowledgement of responsibility by applicants adds legal support to DNR for federal grant programs.

High Level Risks:

- 1) Federal gas tax trust fund does not get supported and the RTP runs out of money.
- 2) RTP does not get supported in national transportation bill.
- 3) Training is not accepted by DPOR management or applicants.
- 4) Grant fraud is identified, FHWA performs audit. Funding is jeopardized.
- 5) Web-based interface isn't available, or identified as unfeasible, or impracticable

Darcy Harris 686 A Recreational Trails Program Process Improvement

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Project Charter: Recreational Trails Program Process Improvement

Project Objectives	Success Criteria	Person Approving
Scope:		
Create a training curriculum and companion application instructions that will be available on internet that assists applicants, decreases work load for State Trails Program staff and provides legal support for DNR.	Applicants are more successful, take less coaching, and take legal responsibility for the federal grant money they receive.	Darcy Harris: Project Manager Ben Ellis: Project Sponsor
Time:		
Meet the Project Progress Milestones (PPM) and have project ready for full implementation by beginning of next grant cycle.	Meeting the PPM deadlines and incorporating feedback. See Milestones Below	Instructor of record, Committee
Cost:		
In addition to the cost of my time (to be valued for the purposes of this project at \$1/he) costs will include an RSA with the Information Resource Management office at DNR, and minimal time from the Director of DPOR and the State Procurement Officer.	Efficient use of time, utilizing internal resources for maximum benefit.	Project Manager, Darcy Harris
Quality:		
Practicability for applicants and legal coverage for DNR.	Actually used in the field and office	Ben Ellis and Darcy Harris

Summary Milestones	Due Date
Develop Project Management Plan, fulfilling PPM1-PPM4, assignments for MSPM	Sept. 12, Oct. 3, Oct. 24, Nov. 21,
Secure assistance from the IRM Division for technical expertise to host on-line training curriculum, establish RSA.	November, 2014
Present final presentation of approved project management plan.	December 1-2, 2014
Develop application instructions. Gain FHWA and State Procurement officer approval of procurement law and RTP guideline content.	January 2015
Develop on-line training content, include input from legal department and have approved.	March 30, 2015

Darcy Harris 686 A Recreational Trails Program Process Improvement

Project Charter: Recreational Trails Program Process Improvement

Estimated Budget: All time spent by Project Manager will be valued at \$1 for purposes of this assignment.	
Project Management: September-December: Initiate Project, Develop PMP: 104 hours	\$104
Development of application instructions. 40 hrs x \$1=\$	\$40
Curriculum development 40 hrs x \$1=\$40	\$40
A minimal amount of time will be spent by both the Procurement Officer and the Director of DPOR for review, approval, and consultation.	
Technology development and integration with curriculum (TBD) RSA with IRM= ? hrs x \$7=\$	

Authority:

Technical Decisions:

The project manager will be working with the Information Resource Management (IRM) Division of the DNR for technical expertise. Any decision having to do with the content of the web page will be approved by both the Division Director and the project manager.

Approvals:

	LuAnn Piccard
Advisor Signature	Advisor Name
	Darcy Harris
Project Manager Signature	Project Manager Name
	Ben Ellis
Sponsor Signature	Sponsor Name
9/22/2014	
Date	Date

Change Track

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Darcy Harris 686 A Recreational Trails Program Process Improvement

3

2014 Darcy B. Harris

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Appendix L: Sponsor Letter



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

Department of Natural Resources

Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

550 West 7th Ave. Suite 1380
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
Main: 907-249-8700
Fax: 907-869-8707

August 27, 2014

Ms. LuAnn Piccard
University of Alaska, Anchorage
Project Management Department Room 155
3901 Old Seward Highway
Anchorage, AK 99503

Re: Project sponsor support for Darcy Harris PM686

Dear Ms. Piccard

I am writing to you to express my support for Darcy's project work with the MSPM program. Her project will accommodate two needs she has identified within the federal grant program she manages. It will help educate grantees about state and federal procurement requirements and programmatic guidelines, which will result in their increased success throughout the granting process and require less of our staff time to help them reach their funding goals. It will also provide the grantees with information so they may engage the program with integrity and responsibility. We look forward to an improved grant program when Darcy is finished with her project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ben Ellis".

Ben Ellis
Director, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

cc: Darcy Harris

2014 Darcy B. Harris

Project Management Department, University of Alaska Anchorage

Appendix M: Research Sources, Methods, and Instruments

Description of expected research methods, instruments and approaches

Darcy Harris MSPM 686A Fall Semester 2014

Internal Stakeholder Survey

(Department of Natural Resource (DNR) , Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR), Federal Highways Administration(FHWA), U.S. Department of Transportation)

Subjects:

Jamie Walker: DNR, DPOR, Administrative Operations Manager

Steve Neel: DNR, DPOR, Grants Administrator

Justin Wholey: DNR, DPOR, Trails Program

Sally Davies: DNR, DPOR, Trails Program Accountant

Marlys Hagen: DNR, State Procurement Officer

Paul Wistrand: FHWA, USDOT, Recreational Trails Program manager

Jeff Budd: Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB) -Chair

Format

Survey questions will be emailed to each informal team member.

Draft Qualitative Research Questions:

1. How can we improve how we manage the Recreational Trails Program?
2. What are the largest issues surrounding applicant success/lack of success?
3. Where could we improve the efficiency of the RTP process?
4. What controls can we establish and employ to ensure grantee compliance?

Results analyzed:

No personal or identifiable data will be collected, however all participants are internal stakeholders, and will discuss the answers to these questions collaboratively. Questions are broadly stated in order to solicit a wide range of honest information from volunteers and not to guide them in their answers.

The results of this survey will be recorded and organized according to category and then applied directly to the area of the program they will affect. For example: If a suggestion is made to include a form to record vehicle mileage associated with a grant contract number, that form will be added to the grantee package for reimbursement requests.

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Applicant Needs Assessment

Subjects

Ten former applicants who have had varying experiences with the RTP application process

Format

Survey questions will be emailed to each willing volunteer.

Draft Qualitative Questions:

1. What have been your biggest challenges when applying to the RTP?
2. How would you like to see the grant application process improved?
3. What kind of reference information or material would be helpful to you when navigating the application process?
4. How can the State Trails Program Office help improve your application experience?

Results analyzed:

No personal or identifiable data will be collected. Questions are broadly stated in order to solicit a wide range of honest information from volunteers and not to guide them in their answers. The resulting information will be organized into categories. For example: suggestions about how to improve the application instructions will be collected together, cross referenced so as to not be duplicative, and organized so they can be directly implemented or inserted into the document.

Information will be analyzed for accuracy and vetted as necessary before included in the instruction manual.

Appendix N: Planning Phase Status Reports

One Page PM 686A Project Status Report Dashboard

Name: Darcy Harris

Date September 19, 2014

Project Title: Recreational Trails Program Process Improvement

Synopsis of Project	Progress Since Last Report
<p>This project will create a required training curriculum, and companion application instruction manual, for Recreational Trails Program grantees in Alaska about how to apply for funding and comply with federal and state fiscal regulations and programmatic guidelines. It will be available on the State Trails Program website for applicants to take at their leisure; however a printed and signed completion verification sheet will be required with their application. This project idea accommodates two needs. It helps educate the applicants, making them able to be more successful throughout the entire grant process, and it protects the State of Alaska, DNR, legally, because the applicants will be informed of the rules and regulations surrounding procurement and federal grants and will have acknowledged their personal responsibility to engage the program with integrity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need identified and project supported by sponsor (charter complete) . • Preliminary schedule and WBS completed. • Committee created and consultation/ meeting requirements established with two of three members. • Communication initiated with IRM group regarding technological interface. • Application instructions started. • PMP started. • PPM1 Complete
Current Status	Forecast
<div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current SPI=(EV/PV= 752/492)= • Current CPI= (EV/AC= 752/752)= <p>I am currently ahead of schedule and on budget. These numbers may not accurately reflect the entire project because there is so little data to date. However I wanted to start using these status tools.</p>	<p>If acceptable I may need to be employing Rolling Wave Planning because some tasks for this project have already begun.</p> <p>I forecast that at this time, if things go as planned and my major risks are not realized, I will be within schedule and budget projections.</p>
Anticipated Changes/Key Risks/Corrective Actions	Key Takeaways/Where Help Needed
<p>I am still waiting to hear if the FHWA will implement a continuing resolution or the Congress will adopt a new national transportation bill. This will be known by early October after the start of the new federal fiscal year. I anticipate this to be low risk but high consequence.</p> <p>I am waiting to hear if I will be allowed to spend the money on an RSA with the IRM (tech) group, or if I will be doing that integration myself. This decision is the predecessor to the RSA task on my schedule although I am unclear how to add this.</p>	<p>Updating schedule and WBS.</p> <p>Answering internal budget questions to be reflected in next PPM.</p> <p>I need to improve my MS Project skills as I understand what a valuable tool it is. Utilizing this has, thus far, been one of my biggest challenges. When my sponsor returns to town I will collect his signature on my Charter. This will be September 22.</p> <p>I will be arranging meeting times with my advisor and committee members now that we will all be in town.</p>

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One Page PM 686A Project Status Report Dashboard

Name: Darcy Harris

Date October 10, 2014

Project Title: Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project

Synopsis of Project	Progress Since Last Report
<p>This Project will create required accountability and guidance material, in the form of an Application Instruction and Information Manual for RTP applicants in Alaska, about how to apply for funding and comply with federal and state fiscal regulations and programmatic guidelines. The information will be available on the State Trails Program website for applicants to review, and acknowledge their responsibility for, at a time convenient to them, prior to the application deadline; and a printed and signed affidavit acknowledging their potential responsibility for federal grant money will be required for application.</p>	<p>I decided to refine my project title from Recreational Trails Program Improvement Process to Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project</p> <p>I have decided to assign myself as two resources in my project schedule in order to track the tasks for school and work separately. My "student" resource has completed PPM2 and has met with members of the graduate committee to talk about progress and research methodology.</p> <p>I am developing my research methodology and survey questions, and identifying the subjects for my research.</p>
Current Status	Forecast
<p>I am currently on schedule to complete the project management plan, and meet the milestones of both school and project elements. My over all project CPI is  due to the fact that some tasks have taken less time than I thought they would. My PPM CPI is  so I am right where I thought I should be.</p>	<p>I forecast that barring my high level risks becoming a reality I should be right on course for both of my identified resources(Student, Project Manager)</p>
Anticipated Changes/Key Risks/Corrective Actions	Key Takeaways/Where Help Needed
<p>I am still waiting to hear if the FHWA will implement a continuing resolution or the Congress will adopt a new national transportation bill. This will be known by late October or early November. I anticipate this to be low risk but high consequence.</p> <p>I will not need to establish an RSA with the IRM division as one is in place already to serve the needs of our division. This will save my project money, however, the IRM division also let me know that they will not be able to offer me an interactive platform from which to host my information. Applicants will be expected to print and sign an affidavit acknowledging their responsibility.</p>	<p>I am identifying which knowledge areas I need to address in detail in my PMP in order to effectively manage my project, and which I will simply acknowledge.</p> <p>I am going to be tracing all of my project requirements back to individual stakeholders and including this in a more in-depth Requirements Traceability Matrix</p>

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One-Page-PM 686A: Project Status Report Dashboard ¶

Name: Darcy Harris → → → → Date November 7, 2014 ¶

Project Title: Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project ¶

Synopsis of Project ¶	Progress Since Last Report ¶
This Project will create required accountability and guidance material, in the form of an application instruction and information manual for RTP applicants in Alaska about how to apply for funding and comply with federal and state fiscal regulations and programmatic guidelines. Applicants will be required to include with their application a printed and signed affidavit acknowledging their potential responsibility for federal grant money and that they understand those legal implications. ¶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Draft of PMP complete ¶ → Description of research methods finalized ¶ → IRB submission complete and approved by advisor ¶ → Product deliverables defined ¶ → Received a GO decision on first checkpoint ¶ → On track with my next set of deliverables due November 21. ¶
Current Status ¶	Forecast ¶
I am currently on schedule to complete the project management plan, and meet the milestones of both school and project elements. Current project status is Green. ¶	I forecast that the project will continue to be on schedule. I will continue to meet the milestones and complete the PMP by November 21. ¶
Anticipated Changes/Key Risks/Corrective Actions ¶	Key Takeaways/Where Help Needed ¶
<p>The federal government has extended funding to the FHWA who has funded the RTP through May 2015. This eliminates a risk that had a high consequence. ¶</p> <p>Another risk that is on the horizon that has low probability but high consequence: If the State gov't administration changes and DPOR changes Directors my sponsor would change. I do not anticipate a new Director opposing the goals or the scope of my project. I see this risk as low (<5%) probability but high consequence. ¶</p>	<p>-Working on Requirements Traceability Matrix to ensure all can be traced to stakeholders and work packages; I have recently found some gaps. ¶</p> <p>Working on presentation, looking into effective methods of data presentation and how to avoid "death by power point". ¶</p> <p>I am having a hard time quantifying my knowledge area learning. ¶</p>

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Appendix O: IRB Approval Documentation

Please note that University of Alaska Anchorage IRB has taken the following action on IRBNet:

Project Title: [675260-2] Recreational Trails Program Application Process Improvement Survey

Principal Investigator: Darcy Harris

Submission Type: Revision

Date Submitted: December 5, 2014

Action: APPROVED

Effective Date: December 5, 2014

Review Type: Exempt Review

Should you have any questions you may contact Sharilyn Mumaw at simumaw@uaa.alaska.edu.

Thank you,

The IRBNet Support Team

www.irbnet.org

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Appendix P: Project Scope Statement Document

PROJECT SCOPE STATEMENT

**Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and
Process Efficiency Project**

DECEMBER 8, 2014

Darcy B. Harris

2014 Darcy B. Harris

Project Management Department, University of Alaska Anchorage

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	2
<u>PROJECT PURPOSE AND JUSTIFICATION</u>	2
<u>SCOPE DESCRIPTION</u>	2
<u>HIGH LEVEL REQUIREMENTS</u>	3
<u>BOUNDARIES</u>	3
<u>STRATEGY</u>	4
<u>DELIVERABLES</u>	4
<u>ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA</u>	4
<u>CONSTRAINTS</u>	5
<u>ASSUMPTIONS</u>	5
<u>COST ESTIMATE</u>	5
<u>COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS</u>	6

INTRODUCTION

This Project Scope Statement serves as a baseline document for defining the scope of the Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project (Project), project deliverables, work which is needed to accomplish the deliverables, and ensuring a common understanding of the project's scope among all stakeholders. All project work should occur within the framework of the project scope statement and directly support the project deliverables. Any changes to the scope statement must be vetted through the Project Change Management Process prior to implementation.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND JUSTIFICATION

The Project has been approved to plan, design, and implement a new accountability protocol and instructional material for applicants to the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). It has been identified that there is a significant lack of understanding on the part of new grant applicants and current grantees, about state and federal procurement requirements and how they directly relate to the federal programmatic guidelines for the RTP. This poses a two-fold problem: it takes an enormous amount of staff time to coach applicants through the lengthy grant process, and as the manager of this program it is my responsibility to ensure compliance with federal and state laws, as well as program guidance; and there are currently limited tools to consistently achieve these complex tasks.

SCOPE DESCRIPTION

This Project will create required accountability and guidance material, in the form of an application instruction and information manual for RTP applicants in Alaska about how to apply for funding and comply with federal and state fiscal regulations and programmatic guidelines. The information will be available on the State Trails Program website for applicants to review,

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and acknowledge their responsibility for prior to the application deadline; and a printed and signed affidavit acknowledging their potential responsibility for federal grant money will be required for application.

The first semester the Project Manager will develop a project management plan for this Project, initiate communication with the Information Resources Management (IRM) division regarding technical support to host this material on the website, and identify qualitative research methodology for an applicant needs analysis. In the time between the semesters the project manager plans to initiate a survey of a select group of applicants utilizing the current application instruction manual. She will also initiate an investigation with internal stakeholders to find out what they think are the most vulnerable, difficult, and cumbersome issues with the current process and manual. During the second semester the project manager will develop an improved application instruction and information manual and an accountability affidavit. These will be hosted on the State Trails Program website. This will be completed in the spring of 2015 and will become public during the subsequent grant cycle, August 2015.

HIGH LEVEL REQUIREMENTS

Accountability requirements and application information and instructions will be available on the State Trails Program website. This is anticipated to increase applicant success and require less staff time for the State Trails Program throughout the process. Applicants will also acknowledge their responsibility for understanding the information and all legal requirements related to applicant accountability. An accountability affidavit for every applicant will be required for successful application for the FFY16 grant cycle.

BOUNDARIES

The Project includes all work associated with planning, designing, applicant needs analysis, and implementing the Application and Instruction Manual and Applicant Accountability Affidavit. This includes requirements gathered from the State Procurement Officer, the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) RTP administrator, the DNR Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR) Administrative Operations Manager, and the State Trails Program staff, conceptual and technical design and testing, troubleshooting, and implementation of this material on the State Trails Program website with the help from the IRM Division of DNR. Not included in the scope of this project are: work associated with a currently open RTP grant cycle, and all other duties as assigned for the project manager in her work day.

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STRATEGY

For the Project strategy, the project manager will initiate an investigation with internal stakeholders, calling on the expertise of the State Procurement Officer, the FHWA RTP administrator, the DPOR Administrative Operations Manager, and the State Trails Program staff, to find out what they think are the most vulnerable, difficult and cumbersome issues with the current process and manual. In addition, she will initiate a survey utilizing the current application instruction manual and a select group of applicants. She will collect and organize the resulting information and develop an improved application manual, an applicant accountability affidavit form, and more efficient application process.

DELIVERABLES

There are multiple deliverables which will be produced as a result of the successful completion of this project. The Project Manager is responsible for ensuring the completion of these deliverables.

1. An approved Project Management Plan.
2. An application instruction and information manual for RTP applicants.
3. Required applicant accountability and guidance material available on the State Trails Program website.
4. An affidavit form, for grant applicants, acknowledging legal responsibility for federal grant funds and state and federal procurement law.

ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA

Acceptance criteria have been established for the RTP Project to ensure successful completion of the project. All acceptance criteria must be met in order to achieve success for this project:

1. The Project Management Plan must be practicable to execute the project and meet the identified goals.
2. Application and accountability material is developed and approved by DPOR management and is available to applicants on the State Trails Program website.

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3. Creation of this manual on schedule and available for grant cycle FFY16.
4. Transition and implementation does not interfere with meeting the FFY16 grant cycle schedule.
5. The project must meet the needs identified by the stakeholders for process improvement.
6. Applicants acknowledging fiscal responsibility and understanding of federal and state procurement rules will be requirement for all grant applications.
7. A successful project will induce a cost savings when staff time to coach applicants through the grant process, is reduced.

CONSTRAINTS

The following constraints have been identified for the RTP project:

1. The Project Management Plan must be completed by November 21, 2014, per the MSPM schedule.
2. The Internal Review Board must approve research methodology prior to investigation.

ASSUMPTIONS

Several assumptions have been identified for the RTP Project. During the project planning phase every effort must be made to identify and mitigate any risk associated with the following assumptions:

1. The Trails Program manager has support from the Division Director to proceed with developing and implementing the applicant information and accountability training.
2. The RTP program will be funded for the next fiscal year.

COST ESTIMATE

In addition to the cost of the student's time (to be valued for the purposes of this project at \$1/hr) and the Trails Program Coordinator's (project manager) time at actual cost (\$63.2/hr) costs will include minimal time from the Director of DPOR, the DPOR Administrative Operations Manager, and the State Procurement Officer for review and consultation. These tasks (other than those performed by "student" are all within the regular job duties of those positions identified.

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COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

The cost of not doing this Project could be equal to the loss of the RTP allotment to Alaska, \$1,527,922, annually. If applicants are found to be ill-informed and irresponsible with federal grant money, a federal audit could result in the loss of that money being available for Alaska's trails' communities.

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**Engineering, Science
& Project Management**
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

**Recreational Trails Program Applicant
Accountability and Process Efficiency Project
PROJECT CLOSE-OUT**

Version 1.0

04/10/2015

VERSION HISTORY OF APPLICATION INSTRUCTION AND INFORMATION MANUAL

Version #	Implemented By	Revision Date	Approved By	Approval Date	Reason
1.0	Darcy Harris	April 6, 2015	Sponsor	April 6, 2015	Final approval

VERSION HISTORY OF LEGAL LANGUAGE

Version #	Implemented By	Revision Date	Approved By	Approval Date	Reason
1.0	Darcy Harris	April 6, 2015	Sponsor	April 6, 2015	Final approval

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION	4
2.0 APPROVED CLOSEOUT PROCESS.....	4
2.1 Closeout and Acceptance Management Process.....	4
3.0 CHANGE MANAGEMENT CLOSURE	5
3.1 Approved Change Management Process	5
2.1 Change Management Implementation	5
RISK MANAGEMENT CLOSURE	5
2.2 Approved Risk Management Process	5
2.3 Project Risk Analysis and Response	6
APPENDIX A PROJECT CLOSEOUT CHECKLIST	8
APPENDIX B: PROJECT CLOSE-OUT APPROVAL	10

1.0 GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

The Recreational Trails Program provides reimbursable grant funding for recreational trail development and repair, and environmental protection and safety/education programs relating to recreational trail use. The Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project developed two tools to improve the effectiveness of the program.

New grant applicants and current grantees require clear guidance about state and federal procurement requirements, federal regulations, and programmatic guidelines for the Recreational Trails Program in Alaska. The iterative tool and administrative controls created for this project will help to guide and inform the applicants and add legal protection for the State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) immediately and into the future. The Application Instruction and Information Manual (Manual) details the rules, regulations, requirements, and processes for compliance surrounding procurement and federal grants and is publically-available for applicants to utilize during the grant cycle. Legal language has been added to the signature page of the application so each applicant understands the importance of compliance and integrity when managing a federal grant. The Manual is intended to be a generalizable tool that will continue to evolve as different groups of stakeholders provide input and feedback with regard to its utility.

This project was initiated to assist the majority of grant applicants with processes, regulations, and guidelines, increase comprehension and success, and reduce management time coaching and frustration for applicants. To a lesser degree but intended to mitigate a higher risk, this project researched, created, and added supplementary legal language into the application that will serve to both add a layer of legal protection for the DNR and remind applicants of their fiscal responsibilities when managing federal grant funds.

The hypothesis for this project is that when applicants have an improved means by which to meet the requirements of the grant program they will become more self-sufficient, knowledgeable, successful, and compliant. It is the program manager's responsibility to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations, as well as program guidance, and there are now effective tools and administrative controls to consistently achieve this.

2.0 APPROVED CLOSEOUT PROCESS

2.1 CLOSEOUT AND ACCEPTANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Project Management: During the Project Closeout and Acceptance phase the project manager will ensure all parts of the Project Management Plan have been completed and to the level of quality expected, including all deliverables completed to the level of quality expected. See Appendix A for the Project Closeout Checklist.

Sponsor Acceptance: In order for the project to be complete it must be accepted by the sponsor. To document this, the sponsor will complete a project satisfaction survey acknowledging that the goals and deliverables for the project have been met and produced, and at an acceptable quality. See Appendix B for the Sponsor Closeout Approval.

Change: During the closing process, the project manager will analyze each approved and implemented change as well as the Change Management Process. Based on this analysis

and experiences throughout the project, the project manager will identify any improvements that can be made to the risk management process for future projects. These improvements will be captured as part of the lessons learned archive.

Risk: During the closing process, the project manager will analyze each risk as well as the Risk Management Process. Based on this analysis and experiences throughout the project, the project manager will identify any improvements that can be made to the Risk Management Process for future projects. These improvements will be captured as part of the lessons learned archive.

3.0 CHANGE MANAGEMENT CLOSURE

3.1 APPROVED CHANGE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

This Change Management Process was developed for the Project by the project manager for all key stakeholders whose support is needed to accomplish the project. It established an organized process for tracking the collection, review, implementation, and coordination of all changes to the project from its beginning. See Exhibit 1 Change Management Process below for the process steps.

Step	Description
Generate Change Request (CR)	A Submitter completes a CR form and sends the completed form to the project manager
Log Change Request Status	The project manager enters the CR into the Change Log. The CR's status is updated throughout the CR process as needed.
Evaluate Change Request	Project personnel review the CR and provide an estimated level of effort to process, and develop a proposed solution for the suggested change
Authorize	Approval to move forward with incorporating the suggested change into the project/product
Implement	If approved, make the necessary adjustments to carry out the requested change and communicate CR status to the submitter and other stakeholders

Exhibit 1: Change Management Process

3.2 CHANGE MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

Through the Change Management Process a total of eleven changes were made to the original Project Management Plan (PMP). Of these changes only one made a significant change. Based on survey data and stakeholder input one original product description was adjusted. The researcher learned through her internal-stakeholder survey that she could accomplish the same outcome and take a more appropriate approach. From the scope baseline identified in the PMP she collected data, used the change management process and incorporated the change to make a material improvement to the project's product.

4.0 RISK MANAGEMENT CLOSURE

4.1 APPROVED RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project

The approach for managing risks for the Project included a method by which the project manager, along with consultation with the project management team of key stakeholders, identified the various risks during the planning phase. The team's goal was to proactively identify risks to the project in order to implement a mitigation strategy from the beginning. Eight identified risks were realized but none of them were serious enough to cause major changes to the scope, schedule, or budget.

4.2 PROJECT RISK ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE

A few minor changes were implemented resulting from risks being realized, however, nothing that changed the scope, schedule or budget of the plan significantly.

During the closing process, the project manager analyzed each realized risk as well as the risk management process. Based on this analysis and experiences throughout the project, the project manager did not identify any improvements that should be made to the risk management process for future projects. Please see Exhibit 2: Realized Risk Register below for more detail.

REALIZED RISK REGISTER										
Recreational Trails Program Applicant										
Project Title: <u>Accountability and Process Efficiency Project</u> Date Updated: <u>April, 2015</u>										
Risk ID	Risk Statement	Probability (P)	Impact (I)				Score (P x I)	Response		May still be realized after project is closed
			Scope	Quality	Schedule	Cost				
1	If the Federal gas tax trust fund is not funded after May the RTP will no longer be funded.	<5%	100%	100%	100%	0%	0.5	Specific project will be cancelled but idea may be transferred to another grant program.		X
5	The RTP is now subject to the new 2 CFR 200 "super circular".	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%		There is no alternative than to comply with the new 2 CFR 200 "Super Circular". Any additions or changes to the former regulations will be added to the Application Instruction and Information Manual. More training and outreach will result in order to assist applicants.		
9	The new 2 CFR 200 "super circular" provides an opportunity of increased structure for program and applicant compliance.	50%	100%	100%	100%	0%	S: 50% Q: 50% S: 50%	The new 2 CFR 200 will add some structure and instruction to areas of the RTP regulation that have been vague. This may help the applicants and managers more clearly understand what is required and take out some element of subjective interpretation.		
10	The new 2 CFR 200 "super circular" may increase applicant confusion resulting in decreased applicant performance.	85%	0%	50%	0%	0%	Q: 43%	If the new 2 CFR 200 causes confusion the management team will increase the number and composition of training opportunities for applicants as well as increase the applicants' opportunities to give feedback and ask questions.		X
11	Project Manager gets sick and this changes schedule of tasks.	50%	0%	0%	100%	0%	Q: 50%	Date survey sent out to Key stakeholders and applicants may be changed but won't affect quality, scope or cost.		
12	Project Manager decides to change date survey opens because of unknown reasons.	25%	0%	0%	100%	0%	S: 25%	Date survey sent out to Key stakeholders and applicants may be changed but won't affect quality, scope or cost.		
14	Responses from the surveys that encourage convince project manager to change project outcome.	10%	100%	0%	0%	0%	S: 0.1%	The project manager is open to the idea that she may be convinced by the data received to slightly alter her approach or deliverables with the Sponsor's approval.		
15	All applicants do not become more accountable even though they are required to acknowledge their accountability.	25%	0%	100%	0%	0%	Q: 25%	The project manager has, at a minimum, put into place legal language to protect the program and DNR, and despite the actual outcome or behavior of non-compliant applicants she has started an environment of improvement and compliance where more education is predominant and non-compliance is unacceptable.		X

Exhibit 2: Realized Risk Register

1. The RTP is now subject to the new 2 CFR 200 "Super Circular" from the Office of Management and Budget. This was a risk that had 100% certainty of happening. It was included on the risk register because it had the potential of influencing the RTP in

Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project

various, and unknown, ways because the program and applicants must comply with these regulations.

This may mean continued risk for all stakeholders involved even after the project closeout. There is no alternative but to comply with the new 2CFR 200 "Super Circular" so the project manager chose to see this as an opportunity for increased structure and compliance. All additions or changes to the former regulations have been added to the Application Instruction and Information Manual in sections as applicable. In addition, more training and outreach about these changes will be included in future workshops and applicant training opportunities.

2. The project manager got sick and the surveys were sent out to the key stakeholders and applicants about a week later than originally scheduled. As predicted there was no significant impact to Scope, Schedule, Quality or Cost.
3. The project manager predicted that the probability of something unknown effecting the date the surveys went out to participants as 25%. This risk was realized because it was intentionally decided that people were busy and distracted during the holidays and few people would likely participate. The response was that the survey was sent out to the key stakeholders and applicants about a week later than originally planned and after the holidays. As predicted there was no significant impact to Scope, Schedule, Quality or Cost.

The project manager, even though the ends were met, and the result will not affect the project outcome, did not effectively use the scheduling tool. Because of this risk, the project manager identified that her schedule was not reflecting accurate available time. The additional time available would have been more easily quantified had the project manager more accurately assessed available time and tested the schedule instead of leaving gaps in the schedule to be used as necessary or ad hoc.

4. The project manager received feedback from a survey respondent, a key stakeholder on the project team that having each applicant sign a separate document called an *affidavit* was not sending a positive message. The project manager agreed that the idea to have the applicants acknowledge responsibility for federal grant money and procurement law could still be accomplished by adding language to the application they sign anyway, and without appearing threatening or untrusting.

The project manager thought this was an excellent observation and allowed for the same outcome by means of a softer method. This follows with the fact that this change is being made to accommodate for the improprieties of a very small percentage yet will be expected of all applicants.

5. There are still identified risks that may be realized even after project closure due to the schedule of the grant cycle.

The project manager has responses planned for these if they are realized.

Appendix A Project Closeout Checklist

Project Closeout Checklist

Version: 1.0

Project Closeout Checklist

Project Title:

Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and
Process Efficiency Project

Prepared by: Project Manager

Date: April 7, 2015

<i>Item</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Comments/ Plan to Resolve</i>
Have all the product or service deliverables been accepted by the Sponsor?	Yes	N/A
Are there contingencies or conditions related to the acceptance? If so, describe in the Comments.	No	N/A
Has Sponsor completed closeout survey?	Yes	N/A
Has the project been evaluated against each performance goal established in the project management plan?	Yes	N/A
Have the actual milestone completion dates been compared to the approved schedule?	Yes	N/A
Have all approved changes to the schedule baseline been identified and their impact on the project documented?	Yes	N/A
Have all approved changes to the project scope been identified and their impact on the performance, cost, and schedule baselines documented?	Yes	N/A
Have Lessons Learned been captured and archived?	Yes	N/A
Has the project documentation been archived as described in the project plan?	Yes	N/A


Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project

Project Closeout Checklist

Version: 1.0

Signatures

The Signatures of the people below relay an understanding that the key elements within the Closeout Phase section are complete and the project has been formally closed.

<i>Position/Title</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Phone Number</i>
Project Manager	Darcy Harris	April 7, 2015	907-269-8700
Signature		4-7-15	

****Note:** Also see the Sponsor Satisfaction Survey in Appendix A of Project Closeout Document

Appendix B: Project Close-Out Approval

Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project

Project Closure / Sponsor Satisfaction Survey

Project Introduction

The Alaska State Trail Program Manager identified two areas of the Recreational Trails Program that needed improvement and produced the deliverables to help accomplish those goals. She followed a project management plan and used project management methodology throughout the planning and execution phases of the project. The final research paper and the associated products represent the execution phase of the RTP Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project (Project). An application instruction and information manual (Manual) was developed for RTP applicants in Alaska, detailing how to apply for funding and comply with federal and state regulations and programmatic guidelines. The Manual will be available on the Alaska State Trails Program website for applicants to study and utilize during the grant cycle that opens August 15 each year. Included in the grant application is now supplemental language on the signature page regarding an applicant's responsibility for state and federal procurement rules, regulations, and guidance as it pertains to the RTP.

Originally the Applicant Needs Analysis survey was developed as a singular research tool but upon further analysis it will be used repeatedly as part of the continuous improvement process.

A secondary result of the research and analysis for this project is the development and adoption of multiple administrative and internal control measures as simple but meaningful tools that will also bolster the continuous improvement process.

Identified Needs and Goals

The predominant reason this project was initiated was to assist the majority of grant applicants with processes, regulations, and guidelines, increase comprehension and success, and reduce management time coaching and frustration of applicants. To a lesser degree but intended to mitigate a higher risk, this project researched, created, and added supplementary legal language into the application that will serve to both add a layer of legal protection for the DNR and remind applicants of their fiscal responsibilities when managing federal grant funds.

The hypothesis for this project is that when applicants have an improved means by which to meet the requirements of the grant program they will become more self-sufficient, knowledgeable, successful, and compliant. It is the program manager's responsibility to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations, as well as program guidance, and there are now effective tools and administrative controls to consistently achieve this.

Project Scope

The scope of this project included the planning, development, and implementation of educational and informational material and creation and implementation of language in the grant application acknowledging applicant legal responsibility for federal grant funds. The project will be determined complete when the manual and the legal responsibility language are approved by the Sponsor and are ready to be posted on the State Trails Program website prior to the opening of the FFY16 grant cycle, August of 2015.

Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project

Recreational Trails Program Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project

Sponsor Satisfaction Survey

- Are you satisfied that the deliverable dates were met according to the final project plan?

I am very satisfied with the RTP Applicant Accountability and Process Efficiency Project that Darcy has completed

- What is your overall level of satisfaction with the products created by the project?

Both the Application Instructions and information and the improved application are very well done and will be valuable tools to the applicant.

- Do you feel like the goals have been met?

Yes. I do believe the goals have been met.

- Are you satisfied with the level of involvement you had on the project?

Darcy has kept me apprised throughout the project and I am very satisfied with the products she has developed.

Sponsor Name Ben Ellis

Signature 

Date 4/06/2015

Project Manager Name Darcy B. Harris

Signature 

Date 4/06/2015

Project Charter: Recreational Trails Program Process Improvement

Project Title: Recreational Trails Program Process Improvement

Project Sponsor: Ben Ellis, Director of DPOR

Date prepared: September 4, 2014

Project Manager: Darcy Harris

Project Customer: DNR and RTP applicants and grantees

Project Purpose or Justification: Business Case or Need

I have identified that there is a significant lack of understanding on the part of new grant applicants and current grantees, about state and federal procurement requirements and how they directly relate to the federal programmatic guidelines for the Recreational Trails Program. This poses a two-fold problem. It takes an enormous amount of staff time to coach applicants through the lengthy grant process and as the manager of this program it is my responsibility to ensure compliance with federal and state laws, as well as program guidance, and there are currently no tools to consistently achieve these complex tasks.

Project Description: Abbreviated Statement of Work

This project will create a required training curriculum, and companion application instructions for Recreational Trails Program applicants in Alaska about how to apply for funding and comply with federal and state fiscal regulations and programmatic guidelines. The training will be available on the State Trails Program website for applicants to take at their leisure; however a printed and signed completion verification sheet will be required with their application. (This may be recorded digitally depending on the interface used.)

The first semester I will develop a project management plan for this project, and initiate communication with the IRM division regarding technical support. During the second semester I will break this project into two phases. I intend to both develop the application instructions that will be a companion and precursor to the on-line training, and organize the technical requirements for hosting this curriculum on the web. This will be followed up by developing the final, on-line content in a web-based training where applicants will need to participate and verify this participation as part of the requirements for application. This will be completed in the spring of 2015 and will become public during the subsequent grant cycle, August 2015. This curriculum and web-interface will be iterative and subject to stakeholder feedback.

Project and Product Requirements:

Training and application instructions will be available on the internet for applicants to access at their convenience. This will increase applicant success and require less staff time for the Trails Program throughout the process. Applicants will also acknowledge their responsibility for the information and all legal requirements.

Acceptance Criteria:

Training available to applicants on the internet to accompany companion application instructions.
Acknowledgement of responsibility by applicants adds legal support to DNR for federal grant programs.

High Level Risks:

- 1) Federal gas tax trust fund does not get supported and the RTP runs out of money.
- 2) RTP does not get supported in national transportation bill.
- 3) Training is not accepted by DPOR management or applicants.
- 4) Grant fraud is identified, FHWA performs audit. Funding is jeopardized.
- 5) Web-based interface isn't available, or identified as unfeasible, or impracticable

Project Charter: Recreational Trails Program Process Improvement

Project Objectives	Success Criteria	Person Approving
Scope:		
Create a training curriculum and companion application instructions that will be available on internet that assists applicants, decreases work load for State Trails Program staff and provides legal support for DNR.	Applicants are more successful, take less coaching, and take legal responsibility for the federal grant money they receive.	Darcy Harris: Project Manager Ben Ellis: Project Sponsor
Time:		
Meet the Project Progress Milestones (PPM) and have project ready for full implementation by beginning of next grant cycle.	Meeting the PPM deadlines and incorporating feedback. See Milestones Below	Instructor of record, Committee
Cost:		
In addition to the cost of my time (to be valued for the purposes of this project at \$1/he) costs will include an RSA with the Information Resource Management office at DNR, and minimal time from the Director of DPOR and the State Procurement Officer.	Efficient use of time, utilizing internal resources for maximum benefit.	Project Manager, Darcy Harris
Quality:		
Practicability for applicants and legal coverage for DNR.	Actually used in the field and office	Ben Ellis and Darcy Harris

Summary Milestones	Due Date
Develop Project Management Plan, fulfilling PPM1-PPM4, assignments for MSPM	Sept. 12, Oc.3, Oct. 24, Nov. 21,
Secure assistance from the IRM Division for technical expertise to host on-line training curriculum, establish RSA.	November , 2014
Present final presentation of approved project management plan.	December 1-2, 2014
Develop application instructions. Gain FHWA and State Procurement officer approval of procurement law and RTP guideline content.	January 2015
Develop on-line training content, include input from legal department and have approved.	March 30, 2015

Project Charter: Recreational Trails Program Process Improvement

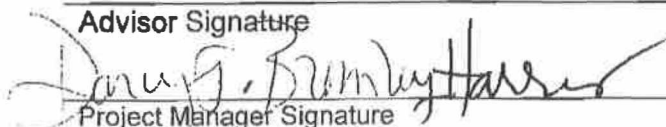
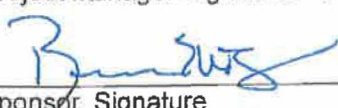
Estimated Budget: All time spent by Project Manager will be valued at \$1 for purposes of this assignment.	
Project Management: September-December: Initiate Project, Develop PMP: 104 hours	\$104
Development of application instructions. 40 hrs x \$1=\$	\$40
Curriculum development 40 hrs x \$1=\$40	\$40
A minimal amount of time will be spent by both the Procurement Officer and the Director of DPOR for review, approval, and consultation.	
Technology development and integration with curriculum (TBD) RSA with IRM= ? hrs x \$?=\$	

Authority:

Technical Decisions:

The project manager will be working with the Information Resource Management (IRM) Division of the DNR for technical expertise. Any decision having to do with the content of the web page will be approved by both the Division Director and the project manager.

Approvals:

Advisor Signature  Project Manager Signature	LuAnn Piccard Advisor Name
 Sponsor Signature	Darcy Harris Project Manager Name
9/22/2014 Date	Ben Ellis Sponsor Name
	Date

Change Track

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THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

Department of Natural Resources

Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

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August 27, 2014

Ms. LuAnn Piccard
University of Alaska, Anchorage
Project Management Department Room 155
3901 Old Seward Highway
Anchorage, AK 99503

Re: Project sponsor support for Darcy Harris PM686

Dear Ms. Piccard

I am writing to you to express my support for Darcy's project work with the MSPM program. Her project will accommodate two needs she has identified within the federal grant program she manages. It will help educate grantees about state and federal procurement requirements and programmatic guidelines, which will result in their increased success throughout the granting process and require less of our staff time to help them reach their funding goals. It will also provide the grantees with information so they may engage the program with integrity and responsibility. We look forward to an improved grant program when Darcy is finished with her project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ben Ellis".

Ben Ellis
Director, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

cc: Darcy Harris